

## **Improving local government transparency consultation: making ‘the code of recommended practice for local government on data transparency’ enforceable by regulations**

<b>Department of Communities and Local Government</b>
<p><b>1. What amendments or additions could be made to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Code to aid compliance?</b></p> <p><i>The easier and less prescriptive the process is, the easier it will be for LAs to be compliant with the code.</i></p> <p><i>LCC wants to be proactive in releasing data – this contributes to one of our 5 values of ‘Being open, honest and trusted’. Being prescriptive may hinder what LCC is trying to achieve.</i></p> <p><i>Clarification is needed as to how this sits with the publication scheme, not clear whether we are to introduce a second list which will effectively mirror the publication scheme resulting in additional resources required to double publish.</i></p>
<p><b>2. What data streams could be added to the Code to aid transparency where services are contracted-out; and help greater access to contract information?</b></p> <p><i>It is the council’s view to publish data streams which have been requested and are relevant to the citizens and businesses of Leeds.</i></p> <p><i>Expenditure is already published through the council’s open data site, and it is intended to publish contracts information through YORtender (with a link from the open data site). We are currently working through the detail of how to manage confidential matters, particularly personal data and information which is commercially confidential to the council or its particular contractors.</i></p>
<p><b>3. Are there other data sets which would be useful to the public that the council might want to consider making available at a future date?</b></p> <p><i>LCC wants to consult with businesses, voluntary organisations and the public to understand what data they actually want and which will allow them to generate more business and set up/improve services.</i></p> <p><i>We would support sharing of good practice models across local authorities, particularly where these are backed up by resident feedback that highlights the impact made by making the data available. Local authorities should have the flexibility to respond to what local people want and be able to prioritise accordingly rather than following a prescriptive list that may not be valued by the public.</i></p>
<p><b>4. Is the description of minimum standards and proposed timing to achieve them correct?</b></p> <p><i>Description of minimum standards seems straightforward and clear enough, however to publish in various formats (required to achieve 3 star status) may not be cost effective, difficult to administer, and unnecessary. The timescales set are restrictive and would be difficult to adhere to - in particular the target to achieve 3 star status from 2 star for all published datasets within 6 months of the revised code being published.</i></p> <p><i>We have concern that copies of contracts and tenders will in many cases incorporate commercially sensitive and on occasion personal information. The resources required to check every contract/tender for compliance with DPA/FOI would be enormous.</i></p>

**5. Is the process of what will happen if the Code is to be enforced clear?**

*There doesn't appear to be any substantial information provided and it is debatable whether this can be viewed as being a 'considered approach' as mentioned in point 30 of the consultation document. LCC wants to actively push the agenda as this contributes to its own values. It doesn't need a mandatory code which it must work within.*

**Specific questions relating to Local Authority Land and Building assets:  
Appendix B to the consultation paper.**

**B1. Do you agree with the information being published?**

*The council's view is that datasets in relation to land and building assets would be a positive 'aspiration' to have.*

*Much of this information is either not currently collected or if it is constantly changing and would put further pressure on resources to keep up to date. It is also unclear whether these are of any great interest to the public.*

**B2. Are there other attributes that should be published to help hold councils to account or to help drive performance?**

*Income data through revenue and capital receipts could be published. Data on operational costs of maintaining council buildings could be looked into. It is the council's view however that any additional datasets should be aspirational rather than mandatory and it is our long term view to increase the number of datasets we publish.*

**B3. Should all of this information be mandated under the regulations?**

*The council's view would be that this should be an aspiration and should not be mandatory. It would take a considerable amount of time to get to a point where this data can be published in the formats necessary to meet 3 star criteria.*

**B4. Should the Open Government Licence be applied to Asset information? If so, how?**

*It is the council's view that there should be a consistent approach across the authority and that licensing should be used to allow re-use, where possible of council-owned data.*

**Additional comments**

In relation to the proposed '**Councillor allowances and expenses – adding any other payments made to councillors from the public purse**' dataset, please can you clarify what is meant by 'other payments' over and above allowances and expenses.

Police Authorities as mentioned in Annex A of the existing code needs changing as these no longer exist.