

Policy statement on open data

The Council is committed to publishing all public datasets, unless they fall under FOI exemptions, and will implement this over the next 12 months.

‘Public data’ means the objective, factual, non-personal data on which policy decisions are based, on which public services are assessed, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery.

‘Dataset’ means a collection of source data in electronic form where all or most of the data has been obtained or recorded to provide the Council with intelligence on its services or functions. A dataset will include raw, original data, with no analysis or interpretation other than relevant calculations. Any explanatory or comparative data deemed necessary will be published alongside the dataset.

The Council’s datasets will not include official statistics, which are subject to their own regime on disclosure and publication, including under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

The purpose of releasing these datasets is to:

- increase transparency and accountability of the Council’s decision making and its functions,
- support sector-led improvement to provide better and more productive and efficient services,
- empower communities, citizens and business to choose or run services,
- innovate through the better use of data, and
- drive economic growth.

As such the data published will be ‘open’ i.e. published via the internet in a re-usable, machine-readable form, and free to access (without application or registration), use and reuse in any lawful way based (generally) on the open government licence (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/). Publication will be in line with the Government’s star three standard as a minimum.

The only exceptions to this will be (i) where it is not practicable or too burdensome to convert datasets into a reusable format, and (ii) where the Council is not the owner of the copyright or database right, and so cannot legally license re-use. Where these issues arise they will be made clear in the Council’s data inventory (see below).

The Council operates controls to minimise the risk of payment fraud from publishing financial data in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Red Book, ‘Actions to Counter Fraud and Corruption’.

What will happen?

The Council will publish an inventory of the public data it holds on its open data webpage (www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/open-data). The inventory and all data releases will also be included within the Council’s publication scheme and registered on the national site data.gov.uk.

The inventory will itemise the Council’s data holdings and specify which will be released and when, the format of release, any third party ownership, and whether the data is licensed for re-use.

The Council will aim to publish all data within the next 12 months and update it as soon as practicable after it is refreshed. Where appropriate explanatory and / or comparative data will be published alongside datasets to provide context. Where errors in data are discovered or files changed, the Council will publish revised information and make it clear where and how the data / file has been amended.

Currently the open data page features those datasets recommended for release by the Government in its *Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency*.

What if I would like datasets made available early or other datasets to be published?

An application should be made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 via the Council’s online form (<http://eserv.middlesbrough.gov.uk/AF3/an/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=GvA4Lb33w-T>). Please see the FoI section of this website for further details.