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## OPEN DATA POLICY

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## Purpose

This policy outlines Herefordshire Council's approach to open formats for data for reuse on the web, and the standards to which it will adhere when it publishes this data. Using open formats for data means that users of the data will not need any specialist software to access the data. If the user's existing software cannot read the data, free software can be downloaded to enable the data to be accessible.

Publishing "open data" therefore enables Herefordshire Council to meet obligations under legislation and standards including the Transparency Code and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as updated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Fundamentally, however, it also enables members of the public to have a choice about the software they use to read and re-use council documents, and it also enables the council to share information more easily.

Open data then is data published in a machine readable, non-proprietary format so that users can access and re-use it regardless of which computer system they use. There is a five star scale for open data, as adapted by the Local Government Association this scale is:

★	Available on the web (in any format), but with an open licence allowing anyone to re-use it
★★	The same as for one star, plus available as machine-readable structured data
★★★	The same as two stars, but with a non-proprietary format (for example CSV and XML, rather than Excel)
★★★★	All of the above, plus use of open standards from the World Wide Web Consortium (such as RDF and SPARQL21)
★★★★★	All of the above, plus the data is linked to other data to provide context

## Policy Statement

Herefordshire Council will publish data in open format to meet its obligations under the Transparency Code and the dataset requirements of the Protection of Freedoms Act.

Herefordshire Council will proactively publish other information on its website that is security classified as not protectively marked wherever possible.

Wherever possible, the process of publishing data will be automatic and in an open format meeting the minimum of 3 stars.

Open data will be published on an advertised web-based platform which will include appropriate tools to help users to exploit the data.

This policy does not apply to any data exempt under the various access to information legislation, including personal data, unless it is anonymised or aggregated.

Whenever open data is published it will wherever possible have the relevant metadata to help ensure the effective exploitation of the data.

All data will be published where possible in multiple physical formats which will allow easy reuse, using non-proprietary and machine-readable formats. For example, csv, odt, JSON, PDF is not an open format. Services may publish data in pdf format, but this should be in addition to a non-proprietary, machine-readable format.

The council aims to publish more data in four star and five star formats.

Four star data would require the council to ensure data contained Uniform Resource Identifiers to make it easier for Herefordshire Council data to be linked to other datasets.

Five star data will require the data to publish linked data. Linked data is a specific form of open data that enables information to be joined up with other related information.

All data will be published with a UK Open Government Licence as appropriate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Information asset owners***

The council staff responsible for the data (the “information asset owners”) will identify datasets to be published and check ahead of publication to ensure that

- it is accurate;
- it is not information that is exempt under access to information legislation;
- publication does not enable fraud; and
- there is no third party ownership which may restrict the publishing and onward use of the data under the UK Open Government Licence.

The information asset owners will log with the Web Services Team where the data is held and what data is to be published. Discuss with the Web Services Team means of automating the process of extracting the data from internal systems and publishing it directly to the web site in real time.

The information asset owners will ensure that the data is maintained and meets the requirements of the Transparency Code, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as updated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, and any other relevant legislation and standards.

### ***Web Services Team***

The Web Services Team are responsible for advising and supporting information asset owners with publishing open data online. Digital will be provided where datasets can be easily located and linked to supporting information and commentaries.

Where possible the web services team will create systems to ensure the publishing of data will be automated.

The Web Services Team will record metadata about the data and register the data so that it can be found.

The Web Services Team will ensure that the UK Open Government Licence terms are available with the open data.

### ***Information Governance Team***

The Information Governance Team will advise as necessary on any information security aspects and any requirements under access to information legislation. The Team will provide training to Information Asset Owners on their responsibilities under this policy.

### **Examples of Information**

Information that can be published in open format includes:

- Public registers
- Service information such as details of accessing services
- Policies and procedures
- Lists of amenities
- Statistical information anonymised where applicable.

Information that should not be published includes:

- Personal data of members of the public, such as names, contact details and service records, unless individual consent has been provided
- Information provided in confidence
- Commercially sensitive information
- Legal advice
- Records in draft format with no completed version yet reached.
- Information from other organisations (unless permission to publish has been obtained).

## Document Classification

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