TOWER HAMLETS

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 5 October 2015 at 7.15 p.m., Room C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

SUPLEMENTAL AGENDA

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

<u>**Contact for further enquiries:**</u> David Knight, Democratic Services 1st Floor, Town Hall, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG Tel: 020 7364 4878 E-mail: david.knight@towerhamlets.gov.uk Web: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee	Scan this code for the electronic agenda:

For further information including the Membership of this body and public information, see the main agenda.

6 .1   **Transparency Commission**   **1 - 32**

    1. Open Data – perspective from Socrata

    2. Unions' perspective – Unison

Leveraging Data to Drive Innovation

Ben Unsworth, Socrata

Socrata

Ben Unsworth

Data Solutions Architect

- Ex local government

- Market and Social Researcher

- Supported over 30 government organisations on their open data programmes

Socrata

Socrata Overview

Seattle-based software-as-a-service provider with a global presence

Founded in 2007

World-leader in open data and government performance management

Focused exclusively on democratizing access to public data to:

- Improve citizen engagement
- Increase transparency
- Drive innovation
- Make data-driven decisions

Socrata

Who do we work with?

Federal	State	City	City	County	Worldwide
White House	Hawaii	Chicago	New York	San Mateo	USAID
Medicare	California	Seattle	Las Vegas	Cook	World Bank
HHS	Texas	San Francisco	Burlington	King	United Nations
CDC	Washington	Los Angeles	Sheffield (UK)	Surrey (UK)	Gates Foundation
ATF	Lombardia (IT)	LB Camden (UK)	Bath & NES (UK)	West Sussex (UK)	South America
CFPB	Friuli (IT)	Bristol (UK)	Rubi (ESP)	Prince George's	Europe
EPA	Indiana	New Orleans	Gava (ESP)	Honolulu	Australia
Energy Star	New York	Dallas	Cambridge	Strathcona	Africa

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Our Mission at Its Simplest

Increase the flow of data

Enrich data with context
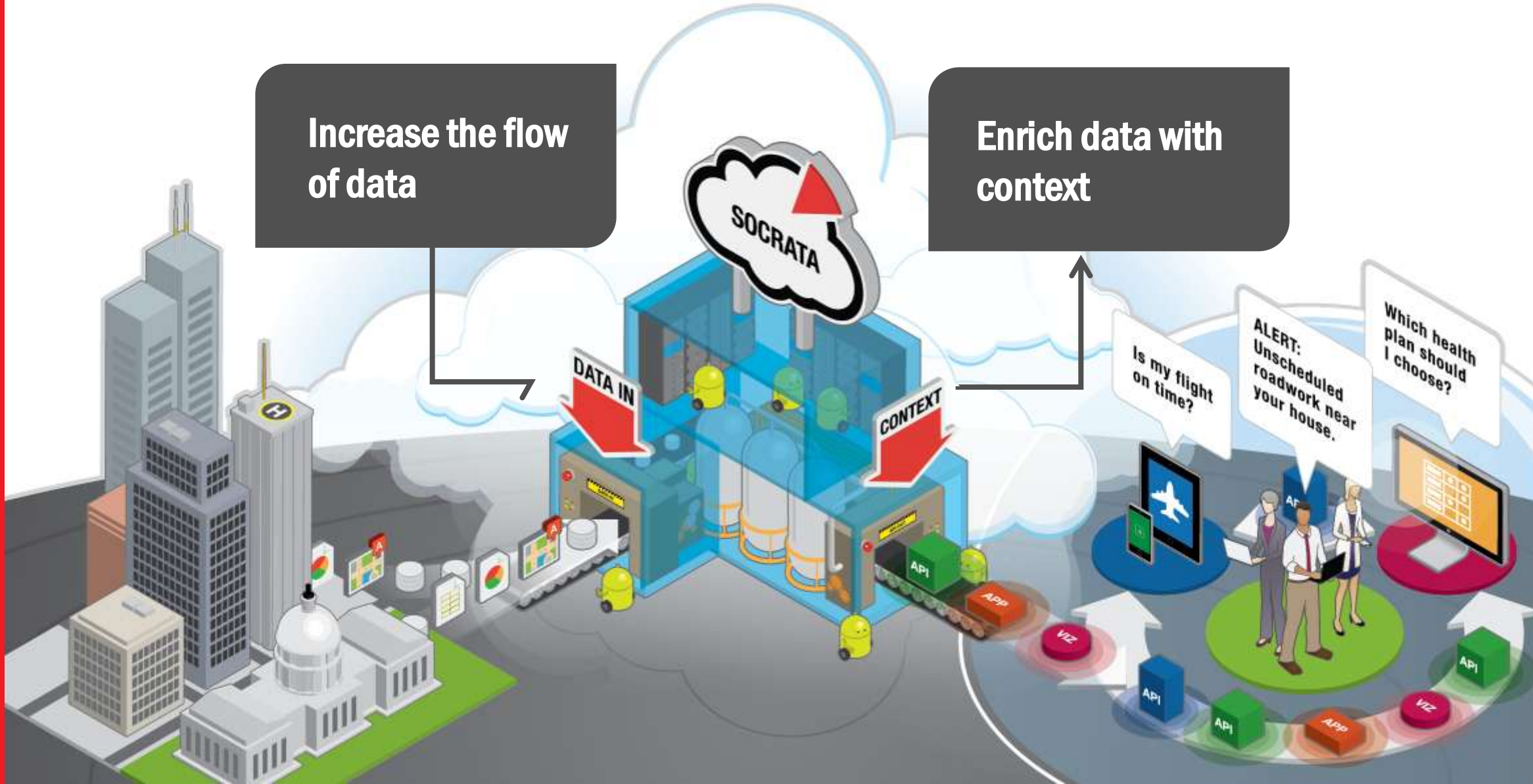
Why Open Data?

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Why Open Data?

Improves Transparency

Builds Public Trust
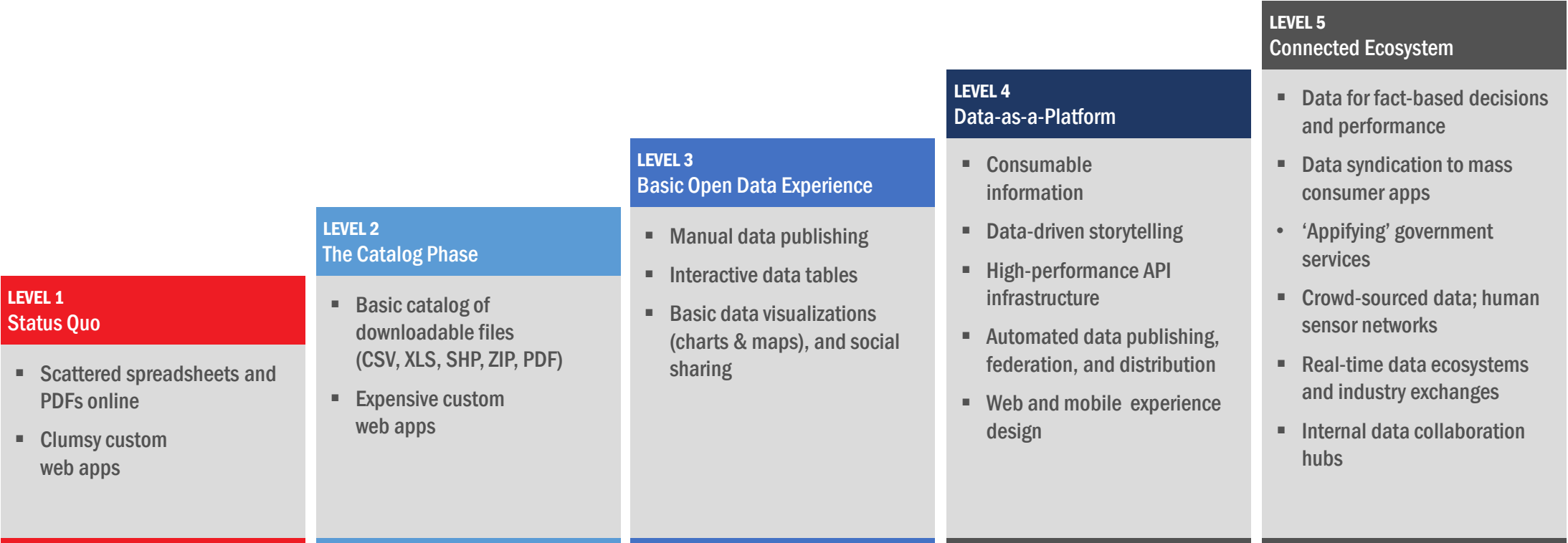
Strengthens Citizen Engagement

Reduces Operating Costs

Supports Data-Driven Decisions

Promotes Economic Activity

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The Open Data Continuum
Gain Value as Your Data Program Grows

LEVEL 1
Status Quo

- Scattered spreadsheets and PDFs online
- Clumsy custom web apps

LEVEL 2
The Catalog Phase

- Basic catalog of downloadable files (CSV, XLS, SHP, ZIP, PDF)
- Expensive custom web apps

LEVEL 3
Basic Open Data Experience

- Manual data publishing
- Interactive data tables
- Basic data visualizations (charts & maps), and social sharing

LEVEL 4
Data-as-a-Platform

- Consumable information
- Data-driven storytelling
- High-performance API infrastructure
- Automated data publishing, federation, and distribution
- Web and mobile experience design

LEVEL 5
Connected Ecosystem

- Data for fact-based decisions and performance
- Data syndication to mass consumer apps
- 'Appifying' government services
- Crowd-sourced data; human sensor networks
- Real-time data ecosystems and industry exchanges
- Internal data collaboration hubs

LEVEL OF DATA MATURITY

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Think about your data users

Your Residents

Laura (Local Resident)
"How safe is my neighborhood?"

Aaron (Community Advocate)
"I want to see trends in Section social housing."

Dave (App Developer)
"I need real-time API access to crime data."

Your Team

Dora (The Chief Data Officer)
"How do we get our data to where it's needed?"

Pam (Democratic Services)
"How do we share data to make better decisions?"

Sammy (Department Head)
"I need to shift to self-service digital channels."

Your Data

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Engaging data users

Keys to engaging with the local open data & developer community

1. Collaborative approach

2. Publishing useful data

3. Ongoing relationship between data owners and the community

https://data.bathhacked.org/
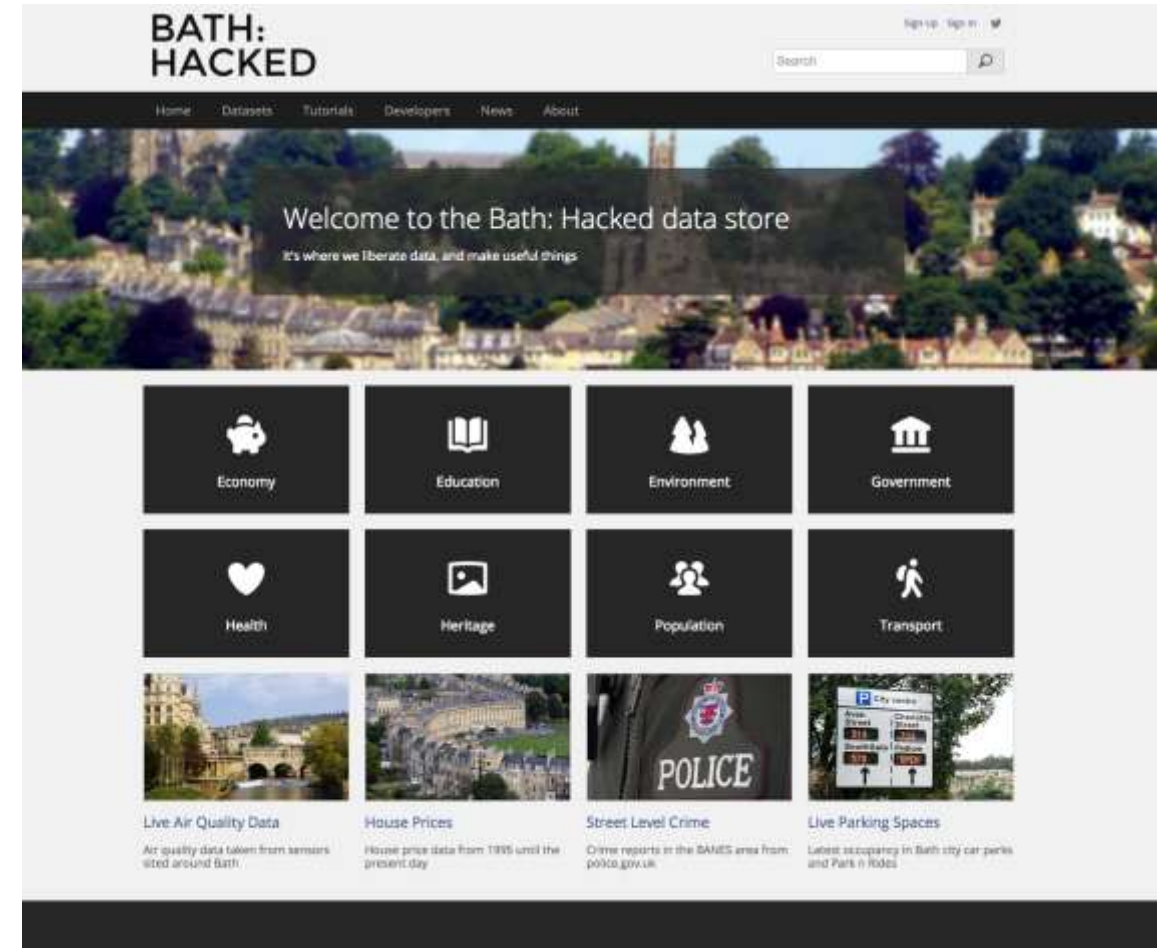
Publishing useful data

Bath: Hacked and the Council have a unique approach

- Volunteer data curators and "Curators Nights"

- Focusing on problems to solve

- Build relationship with data owners

Case Studies

Seattle cuts down on call volume and saves time by publishing 911 data

The Challenge:
Seattle's 911 information has been publically available for over a decade, but only via phone. Elected officials, the media, insurance agents, and attorneys depend on this information, and fielding these requests generated a substantial amount of extra work for the city.

"I thought it would be a good idea to just put the basic dispatch information on the Internet to cut down on the calls and save the attorneys and insurance agents some time. It didn't take much to put the site up - one of my system administrators built it in a couple of days, along with a smart phone app."
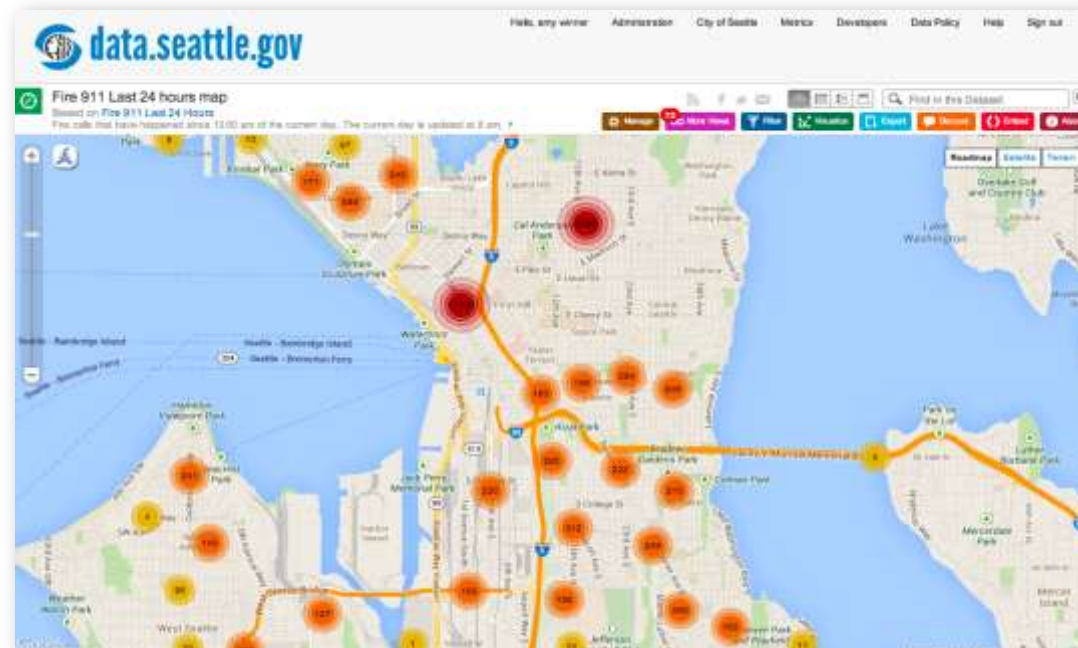*– Leonard Roberts, IT Director, Seattle Fire Department*

The Solution:
Publishing the data to the city's existing Open Data Portal brought made the information accessible to anyone online 24-7. Users can organize, sort, and visualize the data in whatever way best suits their needs. The data is formatted according to HIPPA compliance.

The Impact:
- Data is accessible in real time online
- 911 phone operators are freed up to focus on fielding emergency calls
- The mobile makes accessing the data even more convenient

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New York asks hackers to solve tough issues

The Challenge:
New York City wanted to engage the city's thousands of students and professionals with public data with the goal of rewarding the best tech solutions to civic life in NYC.
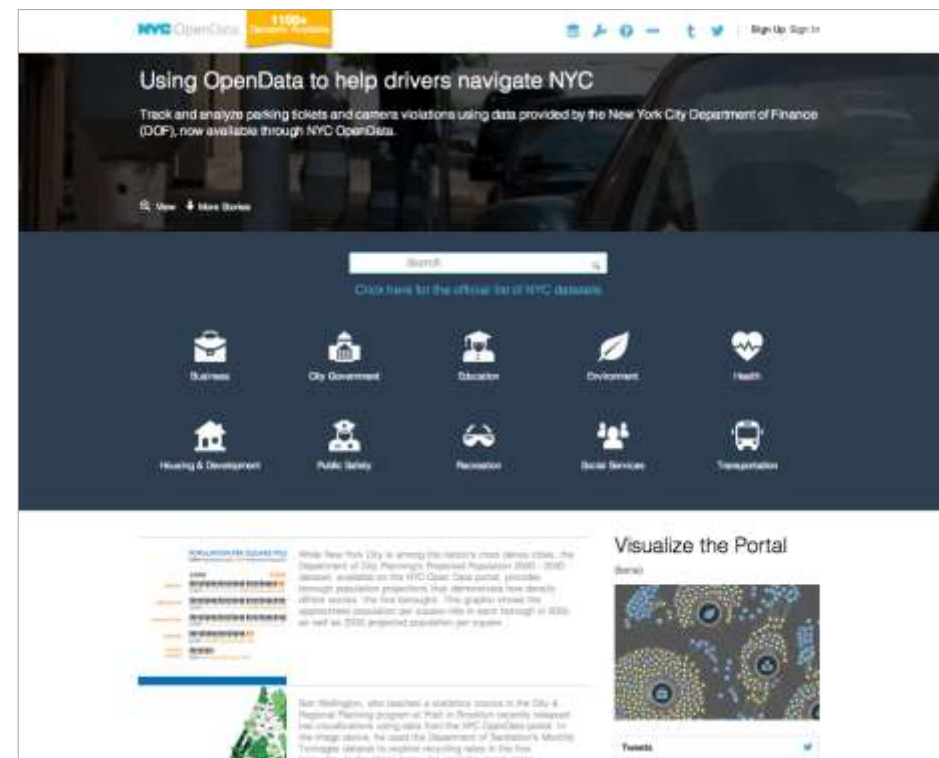
The Solution:
The BigApps Challenge has been a pillar of New York City's open data strategy since 2009. The Socrata platform makes the vast data resources easily sortable and real-time accessible thanks to intuitive design and APIs.

The Impact:
- 2013 BigApps included 13 events, 120 projects, 54 eligible apps, 517 participants, 42 data providers, 7 winning teams
- Founded in 2009 and has launched more than 300 apps
- Has opened up more than 1,000 datasets to developers around the world
- BigApps teams have raised more than $8 million dollars in VC funding

"The real secret to success behind BigApps is marketing the competition so that it appeals to thousands of students and professionals with diverse talents and backgrounds "
- Seema Shah of HR&A Advisors

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State of Oregon Marine Board solves a three-year problem in two hours

The Challenge:
The Marine Board's 7-year old Microsoft Access database was damaged. A replacement solution was going to cost over $100,000, and still would need to be manually updated.

The Solution:
Using the State's existing Open Data Portal, the Board was able to upload the data and customize the visualizations in under two hours. The map is real-time accurate, and citizens can interact with the data to find what they need.

The Impact:
- Replaced $200,000 custom-built database from 2000 and eliminated high maintenance fees and server security risk
- Reduced both time spent producing print publications and costs associated with printing, storing and distribution by 50%
- Avoided paying $100,000 for a new, custom-built mapping system
- Paid $0 to post data on Oregon's existing Socrata open data portal

"Using Socrata has essentially shaved 50 percent off the time I used to use for print publications. I now have more time I can put into doing public relations and marketing that I didn't have time to do before. "

- Ashley Massey, public information officer
Oregon Marine Board
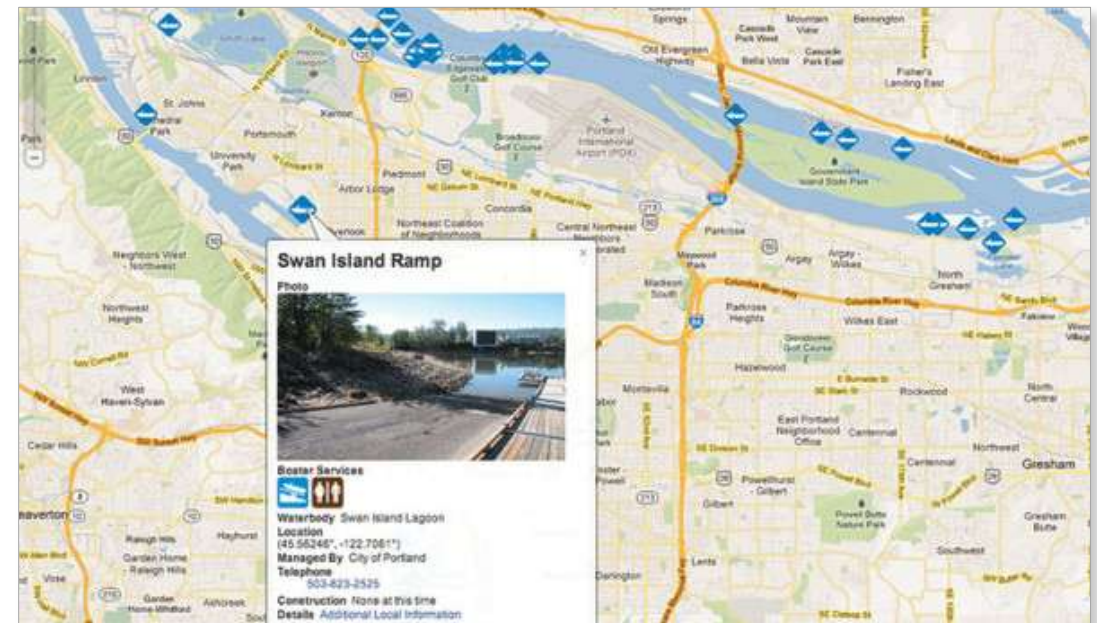
San Mateo uses data to facilitate smarter spending

The Challenge:
Spending cuts during the recession had forced San Mateo County to close two of its biggest parks. After passing a sales tax increase, they wanted to make sure they made the right decisions about using the additional revenue to reopen one of the parks. From a strict cost perspective, the parks were exactly the same.

The Solution:
By visualizing the data in GovStat, they were able to evaluate the value that the parks provided to citizens in addition to the costs. The decision of which park to reopen suddenly became very obvious.

The Impact:
- Visualizing the data made decision making easier
- San Mateo saved $2.2M by being strategic about which parks reopened after the recession

"We need to be able to measure the quantity and quality of our efforts, and most importantly whether they made a difference in terms of improving the health, safety, behavior, circumstance, etc. of our community. GovStat makes it easy for us to tell the story behind the data. It's very visually engaging."
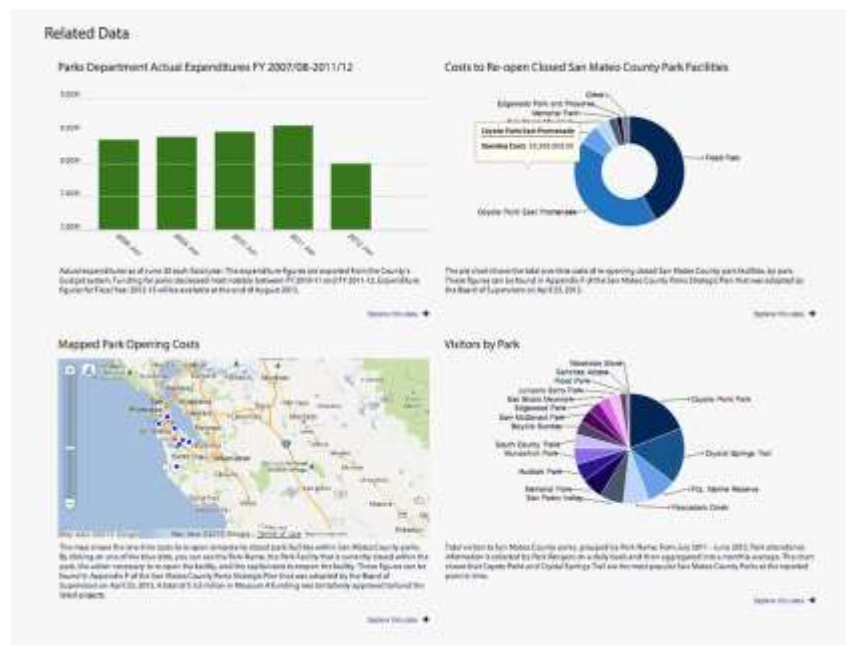*   - Reyna Farrales, Deputy County Manager,   Administrative Services, San Mateo County*

Boston's Open Spending app allows citizens to follow the spending trail to see exactly how tax dollars are spent

The Challenge:
Data concerning the disbursement of public funds is some of the most interesting data for taxpayers. But it's often too complex for citizens to interpret.

The Solution:
The Open Spending app surfaces data on government spending down to check-level detail, educating citizens and encouraging engagement.

The Impact:
- Trends in spending are shown over time, broken down by category
- Visualizations compare spending in certain areas, such as parks versus public art
- Users have the ability to browse vendors by name and see which ones receive government funding

"We will usher in a new era of transparency....By re-imagining our city website and opening up our data...we will we will foster technological breakthroughs while bringing the benefits of the information economy to all of our neighborhoods."

- Martin Walsh, Mayor of Boston

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Thank You!

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http://www.youtube.com/user/socratavideos

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TRANSPARENCY COMMISSION

Recommendations

On How To

Enhance

Trust &

Transparency

1. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- UNISON believes that there were significant problems with the quantity, quality and integrity of the information shared with residents and staff about proposed changes to council services during the 2014 public consultation phase.

- We believe that improvements need to be made if future public consultations are to be genuine and meaningful.

- This should include sufficient detail of what is being proposed and an honest appraisal of the potential risks and dependencies that changing or stopping a service may bring.

- The same applies to the information included in public report packs e.g. Equality Impact Assessments

'Your Council Your Voice' 2014

During the consultation UNISON expressed strong concern about some of the information put up on the council website and contained in some of the public report packs - particularly about ESCW proposals:

- Scant information – 2 or 3 paragraphs only to explain very significant proposed changes to services

- Vague – making it impossible to know exactly what was being proposed in some cases

- Risk - omitted, minimised or veiled

- Inaccurate information/perceived misleading claims

- The council's business case documents (not circulated to the public and staff) setting out a different narrative about assessed risk

EXAMPLE

What was proposed:

'Savings proposal: Mainstream social work support for Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Impact summary :This proposal will not affect eligibility for, or access to CAMHS. Through this proposal we will remove the social workers within the CAHMS . Service users will continue to be provided with social care support through core social work teams'…..

What is not revealed:

- This proposal would have cut 12 social workers from the CAMHS service. This is ¼ of the local CAHMS workforce

- This would have significantly reduced the capacity of that service by 25%

- The work of the CAHMS social workers (most of whom are dual qualified) and the capacity of the core teams to absorb their work is fundamentally inaccurate as - CAMHS social workers do not provide 'social care support' - they conduct 450 child mental health assessments every year and function as the lead M.H practitioner in carrying out the assessed interventions

Surrounding factors

- The union's attempt at the time to engage in a discussion about information inaccuracy and perceived misrepresentation was met with a blanket refusal

- Many relevant staff not informed of the public consultation

- Others given a '3 line whip' and instructed not to talk about the proposals with service users at all or risk being disciplined

- Trade unions not given advance notice that the public consultation was about to be launched despite being major stakeholders

All of this combined to give the impression that our members and the public were not being dealt with fairly, honestly and in good faith during this exercise.

SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

- In future public consultations full information on each proposal is provided

- Dependencies are identified within the information

- For EEL to play a greater role in publicising the detail of proposals generally - but particularly in relation to informing the digitally disadvantaged

- Potential risk and possible mitigation clearly and honesty revealed so this can be properly discussed and considered by residents and stakeholders

- All relevant staff informed

- Trade Unions informed in advance (on a confidential basis)

2. WHISTLE-BLOWING

- UNISON welcomes the inclusion of this topic by the Transparency Commission. Why?

- As far back as **April 2014** UNISON raised the need for and requested that an exercise be undertaken within ESCW to examine and modify how the council handled whistleblowing and staff complaints particularly about alleged management malpractice - so staff could be assured that they would not be sacked, victimised or suffer detriment should they step forward in good faith to report concerns or act as witnesses.

- We recommended that this exercise should apply the learnings/findings from key reports about major public sector whistleblowing incidents – Sir Robert Francis's report about Mid-Staffordshire Trust Hospital, Public Concern at Work, Public Accounts Committee etc.

- Our assessment of the need for such an exercise was based on observations of how a large group of members in ESCW who were complainants, witnesses or both had recently been treated by 'organisational power holders'.

- The council's relevant policies on complaint making/victimisation considered generally fit for purpose- but in the union's view a serious systemic problem existed in relation to the implementing of these fairly, impartially and without conflicts of interest on the part of organisational power holders.

- The union's request was refused. The position of Senior Officers at that time was that no such exercise was necessary.

Scope of definition

- It is important not to lose sight of the fact that a 'qualifying disclosure' (whistleblowing) under PIDA 1998 has the potential to be wider than reporting wrongdoing about potentially high profile matters such as fraud and corruption

- Reporting any perceived serious wrongdoing/malpractice at work in good faith and with reasonable belief has the potential to be a qualifying disclosure. This could include complaints about:
  - An individual's own treatment
  - An individual's observations of the treatment of other members of staff
  - Concerns about how a service user's case is being handled
  - Discrimination
  - Health and Safety

- Within social care these are the sorts of concerns that the union is more likely to have brought to our attention by members

- A protected disclosure can be made via a number of the council's formal HR procedures *or* outside of any formal procedure. Reference does not have to be made to 'blowing the whistle' or alike at the time of reporting

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Example - March 2014

The Docklands & East London Advertiser

Search

Sacked whistleblower wins tribunal judgement against Tower Hamlets

18:06 28 March 2014 | Mike Brooke

A whistleblower sacked by Tower Hamlets council after accusing her boss of bullying in the office has won her case for wrongful dismissal.

STAFF VOICES

- **November 2014** the council's 'Social Work Health Check' (SWHC) is released

- It contains strong and negative messages from Tower Hamlets social care staff about the safety of whistleblowing

- **What is the 'Health Check' ?** - The national Social Work Task Force set up after 'Baby P' recommended that all employers of Social Workers conduct a regular 'health check'

- The aim of the check is to research how social care staff experience their work environment and view the culture of their organisation

- The Tower Hamlets SWHC draws on quantitative and qualitative approaches, is methodologically competent and lead by the Principle Social Worker

- Likely the biggest (anonymous) exercise the council has ever undertaken in relation to exploring staff perceptions of organisational culture specific to social care - with 130 Social Workers/Social Care staff completing the survey, followed by 33 team based focus group sessions across the directorate

What did staff say?

- **The SW Health Check found that:**

➢ 'The whistleblowing blowing and procedure is not well regarded by social care staff: 31.5% self reported that they would not speak up through a whistleblowing process'.

➢ 'Only 26% in the survey agreed that Tower Hamlets is a safe place for whistleblowing. This was a serious concern for the project team. How can staff speak up about perceived serious wrongdoing if the working culture feels oppressive?'

" I knew some people who were involved in whistleblowing last time and saw how they were treated – I would NEVER whistle blow'' – Quote from report

- The SWHC report recommended that: 'An exercise /strategy must be developed to increase worker confidence in the council's whistleblowing policy. This should include Trade Union involvement.'

Current situation & suggested way forward

- To date UNISON has not been asked to participate in such an exercise but would welcome an invitation

- Unclear about the status of this recommendation in the SWHC and how it interfaces with the work officers have been asked to do as part of the Transparency Commission's work?

- In the shadow of high profile social care failures such as in Rotherham, it is the union's view that this recommendation **must** be taken forward with **genuine intent** - with the focus not simply being on 'tweaking' or publicising current procedures, but rather centres on learning lessons from the past and developing strategies that move the organisational culture forward. Cultural change of this kind is a complex endeavour.

- Whatever the difficulties and differences of opinion about this topic which have characterised the recent past, UNISON remains willing and open to working with management and the council on a shared goal of moving forward positively on this issue - for the benefit of our members and for the benefit of the vulnerable service users that many of them work with.

3. Procurement

- We would wish to see greater information sharing about key policies such as the consideration of outsourcing (or insourcing), shared services, strategic partnerships etc.

- Firstly, we believe there should be as wide a consultation as possible at the earliest possible stage, when policy on such matters are being considered, especially with key stakeholders, one of which is the Trade Unions.

- The Trade Unions have put forward at various times a formal procurement policy to seek to formalise this in Council policy. Our experience is that we are often only involved at the point at which policy has been settled and consultation is only about the implementation of policy, and what might be termed HR aspects of it.

- A key example would be the ICT strategic partnership. The Trade Unions were not informed or involved at all until after an OJEU notice had already been served. The decision to enter a strategic partnership was already too far advanced for any meaningful consultation about whether that was the best path to follow.

- There was genuine consultation on the process that followed and in particular on the TUPE and associated arrangements for staff, but this essentially becomes about how the policy will be implemented, not the policy itself.

Procurement continued

- A second general principle comes into play here as well - "Commercial confidentiality" frequently becomes a barrier to proper transparent consideration of options and policies.

- We believe the authority should adopt a culture of preference for disclosure and openness in procurement, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is not possible for compelling legal or other reasons.