

London's Mayor announces "London Data Store"

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The initiative is part of a campaign to boost the transparency and accountability of City Hall, and will be formally launched at the end of January 2010. Plans are for the Datastore to contain over 200 different sets of information, such as crime rates, abandoned vehicles, schools data, hospital waiting lists and recycling rates. Here's a link to the Datastore website: <http://data.london.gov.uk/>; more information can also be obtained by emailing datastore@london.gov.uk.

In a statement, Johnson said, "I firmly believe that access to information should not just be the preserve of institutions and a limited elite. Data belongs to the people - particularly that held by the public sector - and getting hold of it should not involve a complex routine of jumping through a series of ever decreasing hoops."

According to the Datastore site, the policy will be "to only withhold data where to release it would infringe privacy legislation or a contractual obligation eg commercial confidentiality." The license conditions under which data can be used will vary for each data package; however, the site says that "in general the data held in this site can be used for most purposes, provided the Terms and Conditions of this site are not infringed." The data comes in several different formats; each data package has its own licensing terms.

Locus is very pleased to see this initiative coming to fruition, and we're looking forward to seeing the rest of the datasets that are to be released at the end of the month. We believe that enhancing access to Public Sector Information (PSI) for re-use brings economic benefits as well as improving services to citizens. This move by the Mayor of London sets an excellent example which we hope to see repeated across Government in the coming weeks.