



## Reinstating a Government Open Data Coordination Function

**Problem:** Despite genuine progress under the previous administrations – including the work of the Cabinet Office and the various open groups and coordinating boards – open data release across government and the public sector is still fragmented, inconsistent and treated as a secondary concern. Quality and standards vary considerably, and there is a troubling reluctance to acknowledge the systemic value that open data delivers.

Many services citizens rely upon daily would not exist without open data. Yet internal impact assessments continue to dominate how value is measured, overlooking broader social and economic benefits. This directly affects the civil society and VCSE organisations we support – whether accessing address data for local energy planning, analysing local authority spend to underpin Community Wealth Building, or linking datasets to identify companies operating illegally, particularly around environmental and waste crime.

**Possible Idea:** Government should recognise the coordinated release of open data as a strategic national asset – one that delivers compounding benefits across public services, economic growth, civil society and democratic accountability. To realise this, government should re-establish a formal open data coordination function that:

- Sets and promotes agreed open standards to give public sector bodies and local authorities the confidence to release data consistently
- Provides a structured feedback loop between civil society, business and the public sector to ensure released data is genuinely useful
- Builds the government's own understanding of the wider, systemic value open data creates beyond departmental metrics

This could be achieved by reinstating the Open Data User Group and appointing a

named government lead to drive a coherent, cross-departmental approach.

**Why It Fits:** A strategic approach to open data sits at the heart of transparency, accountability and participation. It could be co-created with open data advocacy organisations, civil society bodies and public sector representatives, and would support commitments across multiple areas of the NAP7 agenda.