

PROTOTYPE This is a prototype and is only intended for research and experimentation.

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Department
for Transport

Guidance

Opening up local authority transport data

Updated 14 Jul 2021 (v0.8)

On this page

- [Understanding the context](#)
- [Actions you can take](#)
- [Case studies and examples](#)
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This guidance is for local authorities in England. It provides advice, tips and case studies on opening and sharing transport data.

This is a prototype; [your feedback \(no link yet\)](#) can help us improve it.

Understanding the context

[Why should you share your transport data? - executive summary](#)

Including concrete examples of the benefits you could achieve.

- [What “open data” means](#)
- [Our open data principles](#)
- [Why this guidance exists](#)
- [Who to contact about this guidance](#)
- [Context within other DfT projects](#)
- [Transport data basics](#)
 - [Types of transport data](#)

Actions you can take

- [Establish what data you have](#)
 - [Make an internal transport data catalogue](#)
 - [Understand your data quality](#)

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Local authority transport data guidance

Transport Technology Forum Conference,
May 2022

Stephen Nand-Lal



Project objectives

Objective:

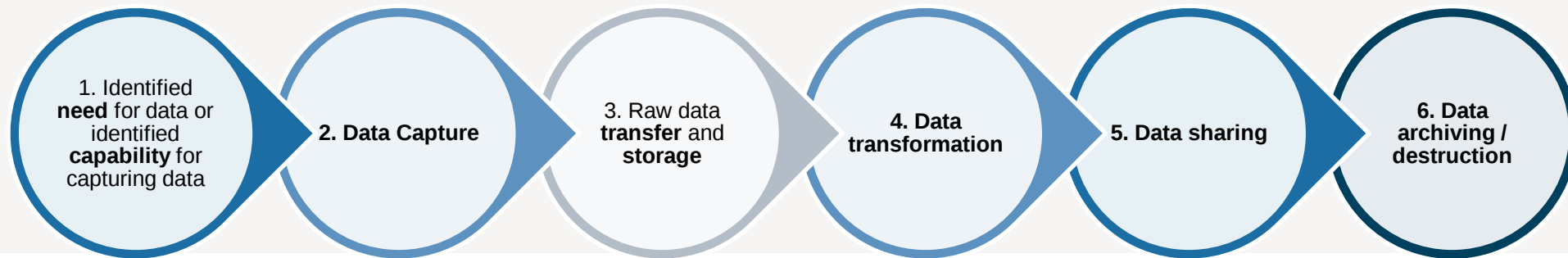
- › To provide detailed guidance to English local authorities on how to open up, share and exploit their transport data

Three key areas:

- › Traffic management
- › Active travel
- › Future of transport

Must be **truly user-centred**

Must cover end to end data journey:



Project scope

Evidence review of current data landscape

- › LA questionnaire – 49 authorities responded
- › Discussions with STBs & FTZs
- › Discussions with third party suppliers

User requirements and pain points for the guidance

- › Interviews / workshops with LAs
- › User requirements spec for the guidance

Operational benefits and new business models

- › To help explain why data sharing is valuable

Develop guidance

- › In accordance with the user requirements spec
- › In partnership with LAs at every stage
- › To cover the end to end process
- › Tested against user requirements



Findings from the evidence review

National policy landscape

Policies:

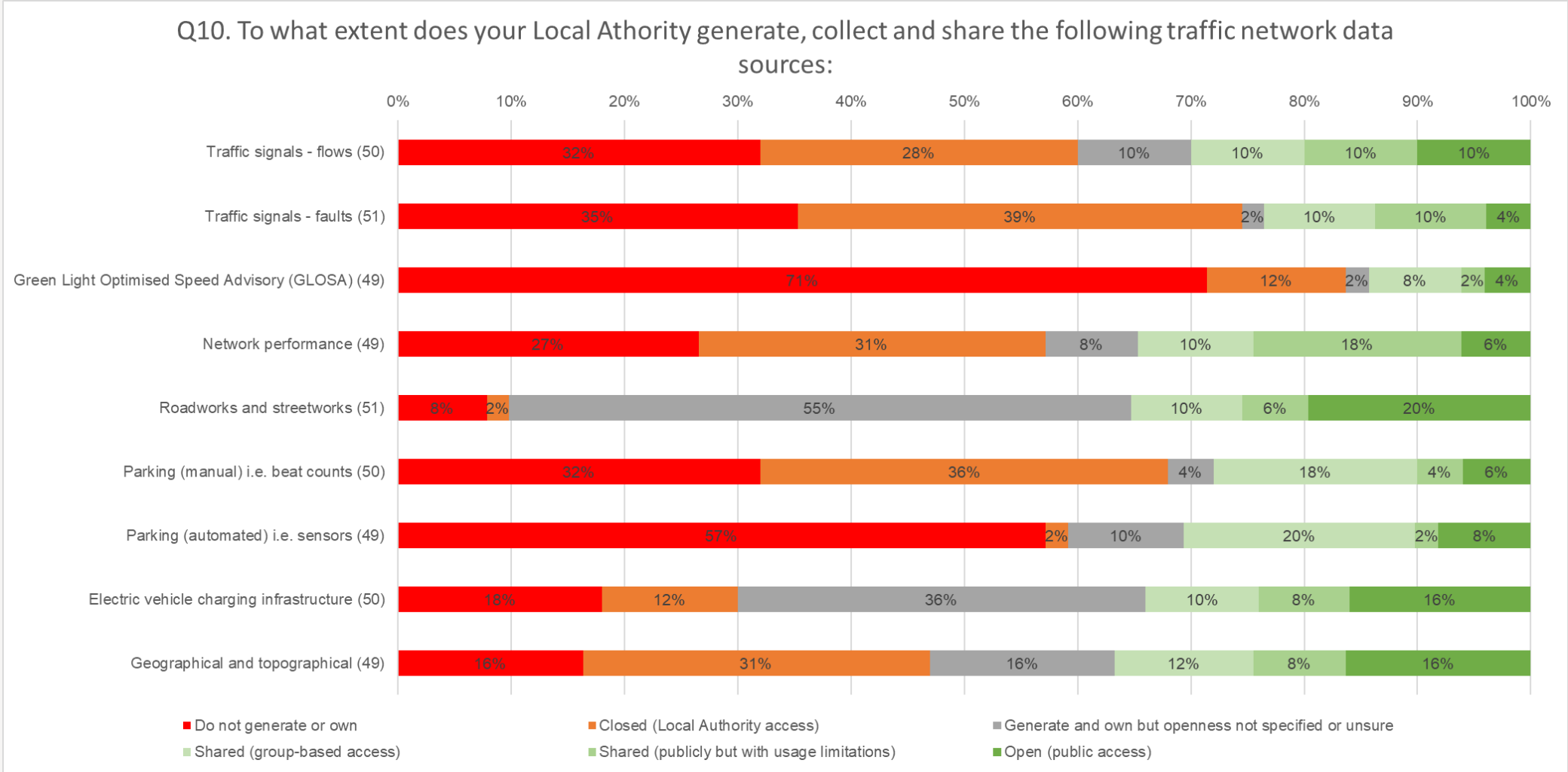
- › FOMUS / FOMRS
- › FOT Regulatory Review
- › Decarbonisation

Open data policies

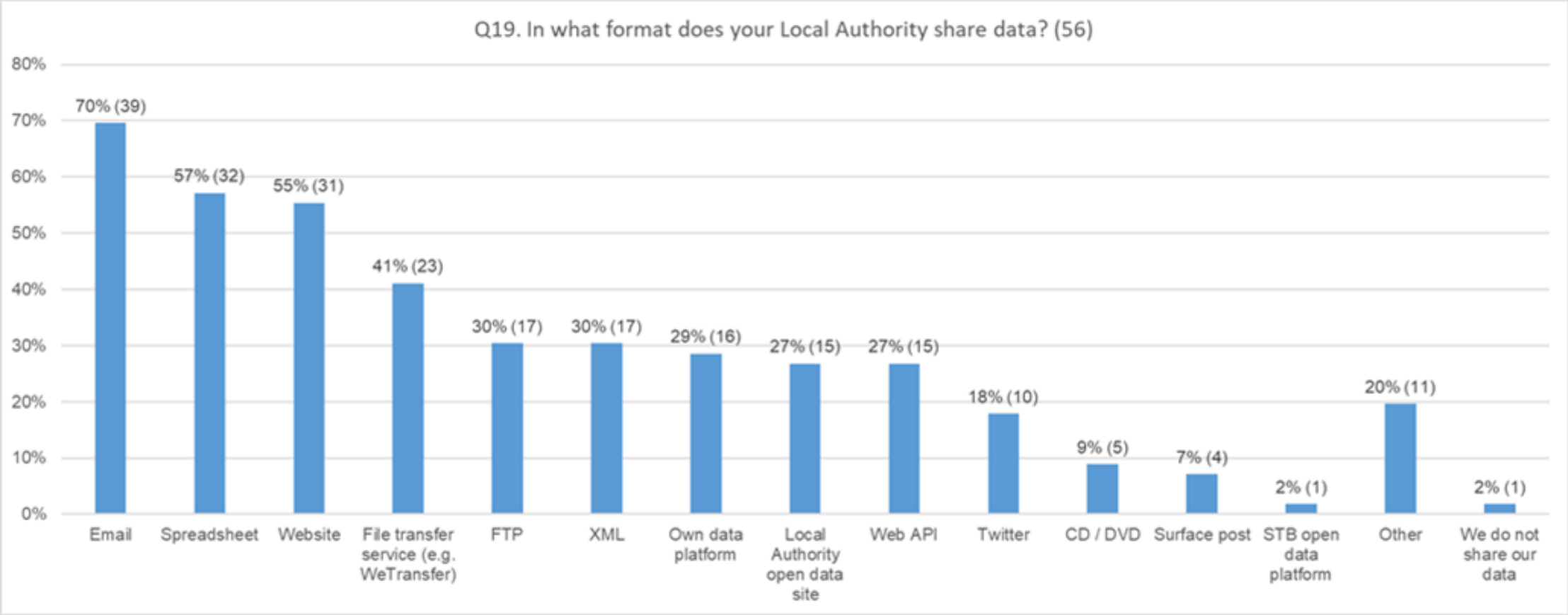
- › Data strategy
- › Bus Open Data Service
- › Street Manager
- › National Street Gazetteer
- › Digital TROs
- › National Parking Platform
- › National Access Point



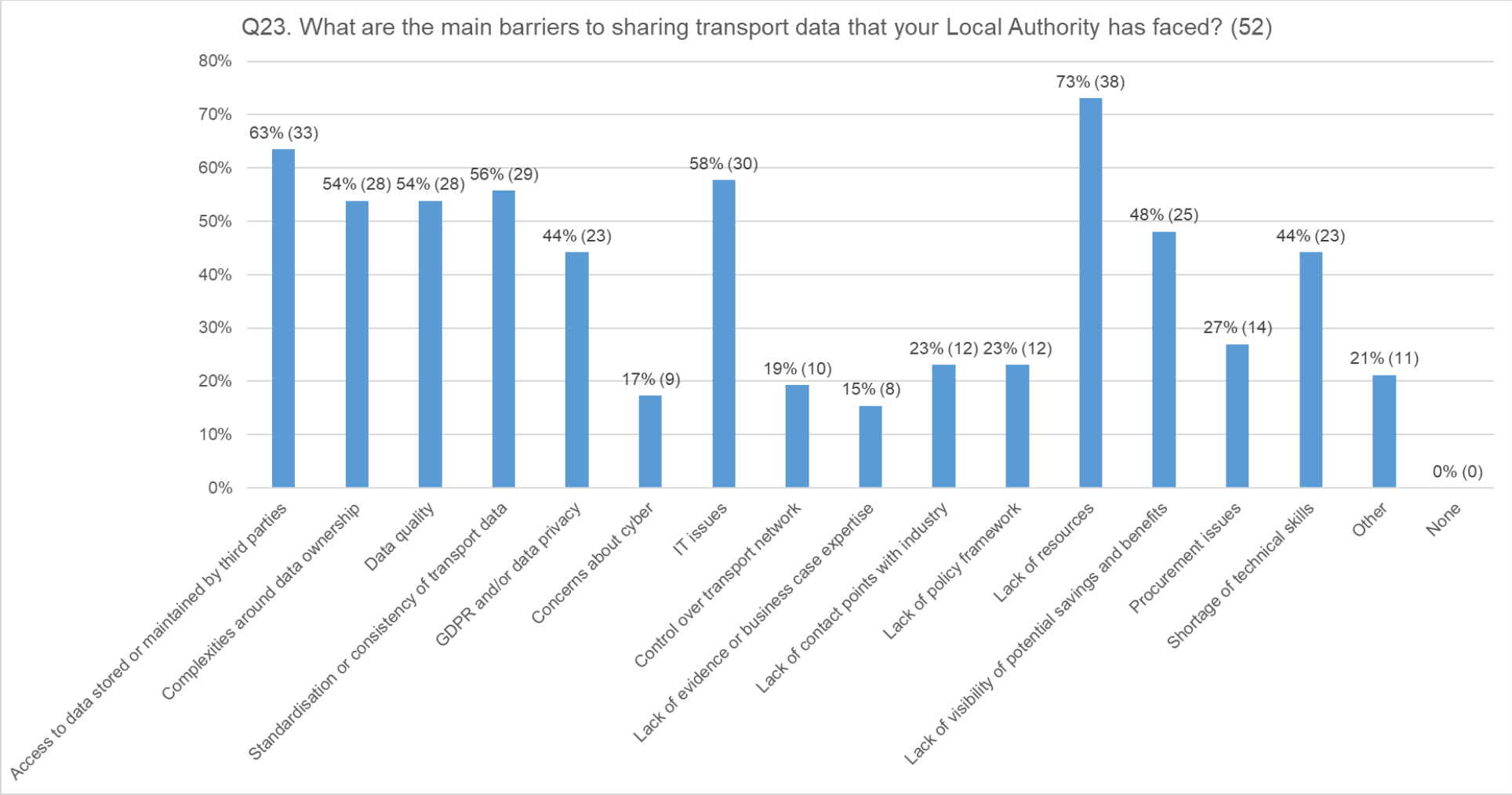
Traffic and parking data



Data sharing



Pain points



Summary of consultation findings

Data sharing has increased in the last few years - but often quite manual

Lots of agreement with our pain points from LAs, similar to 2017

Some great examples of LAs sharing data

Data sharing for COVID-19 showed what can be done

Future transport agenda relies on data sharing

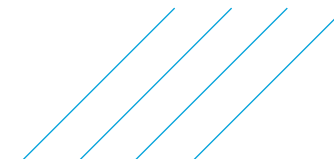


User requirements for the guidance

What features do users want from the guidance?



Several of these point towards the guidance being web-based



What content do users want from the guidance?



Open data – the basics



Stories from the field – learning from others



How to open, share and exploit transport data – your questions answered

These form the three main sections of the guidance



Guidance prototype

Guidance prototype

- Guidance will be delivered as a publicly-accessible website
- Final presentation of guidance is being developed
- Highlight a number of key areas contained within the guidance
- Consultation phase highlighted these as **must have aspects** for local authorities

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Actions you can take

Prepare to share your data

- [Establishing what data you have](#)
- [Making an internal transport data catalogue](#)
- [Understanding your data quality](#)
- [Understanding needs](#)
- [Choosing which datasets to publish](#)
- [Producing an open data publication plan](#)
- [Writing a business case \(if you need one\)](#)
- [Getting additional help and support](#)
- [Procurement of services \(if required\)](#)
- [Considering privacy and security](#)

Publish your data

Publish your data

- [Applying the right data standards](#)
- [Opening your data and making it usable](#)
- [Deciding on your licensing terms](#)
- [Sharing geospatial data](#)
- [Sharing location data from Ordnance Survey base maps](#)
- [Creating metadata](#)
- [Publishing your data on a data platform](#)
- [Using UTM as your data platform](#)
- [Publishing via other data platforms](#)

Optimise your data sharing

- [Promoting your data](#)
- [Maintaining your data](#)
- [Evaluating the impacts of sharing your data](#)

Case studies

Practical examples of data sharing and its consequences, from York, Bristol, Manchester, Harrogate, London and elsewhere.

Other supporting information

- [Glossary of terms](#)
- [Data ethics](#)
- [Myths and misconceptions](#)
- [Open data learning resources](#)
- [Open data support communities](#)

GOV.UK Prototype Kit v9.13.0 [Clear data](#)

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Why share your transport data

Engagement and consultation phase highlighted the need for a page bringing together:

- Links with government policy
- Benefits of open transport data to both:
 - a local authority
 - the local community
- Can be **shared within a local authority**
 - to encourage support for open transport data

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Opening up local authority transport data

Why you should share your transport data

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Because of government policy

In 2012, the government published an [Open Data White Paper](#), setting out a vision to maximise the benefits of sharing data. This led to the government promoting a policy of “Open by Default” for public sector data, across all departments.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has many initiatives, all supporting open data. The DfT has demonstrated the value of sharing transport data to monitor impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) and travel restrictions. It is essential for the [Future of Transport \(FoT\)](#) agenda (see below).

Local authorities should consider aligning with the government and the DfT by moving towards an ‘open by default’ policy.

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Transport data

We discovered a number of confusions and misunderstandings with respect to types of transport data:

- What data standard should I use?
 - How can I find more information?
- How can I share my transport data?
- Are there any GDPR issues with sharing my transport data?

Data category	Data types available	Standard	Link / contact for further information	Common sharing method (where applicable)	Potential for personal data?
Active travel	Safety data for active travel modes	No commonly agreed standard			Y3
Active travel	Cycle counts	No commonly agreed standard			Y1
Active travel	Cycle detectors	No commonly agreed standard			Y1
Active travel	Cycle lane usage counts	No commonly agreed standard			Y1
Active travel	Pedestrian counts	No commonly agreed standard			Y1
Active travel	Secure bike parking locations	No commonly agreed standard			N
Air quality data	AQ locations			UTMC	N
Air quality data	Values			UTMC	N
Air quality data	Thresholds			UTMC	N
Cycle / e-cycle / e-scooter hire	Station locations	GBFS / MDS	GBFS MDS		N
Cycle / e-cycle / e-scooter hire	Station status	GBFS / MDS	GBFS MDS		N
Cycle / e-cycle / e-scooter hire	Vehicle types	GBFS / MDS	GBFS MDS		N

Creating metadata

Our engagement highlighted that many authorities struggle when it comes to creating metadata for data sets

Our guidance aims to address this by providing clear and easy to digest information about how to create metadata

It provides suggestions of the minimum fields that good metadata would include, as well as some optional fields



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Creating metadata

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Good metadata will ensure that users can find your data set, and understand the data. As data sets grow and evolve, you should maintain your metadata.

Metadata is data that provides information about a data file. Metadata helps a machine to understand the data file. For example; every time you take a photo with your smartphone, it saves relevant metadata: the date and time, the location, the file size.

To ensure your metadata is easy to navigate and easy for data users to understand, the entries in these metadata fields should be as consistent as possible across your data sets. Free-text descriptions are to be avoided if possible as they can cause confusion and are not machine-readable.

The table below suggests the minimum metadata fields you should include and example responses. You should publish the metadata in the same place as your open data, for example see [Bristol's metadata for its cycle network](#).

Metadata field	Some suggested response options
Title	Title of the data set.
Unique Identifier	Include a unique identifier of the data set, if applicable.
Website URL of the data set	Website URL to the published data.
What data is included	Air quality. Electric vehicle charging points.

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Considering privacy and security

Local Authorities have cited concerns about privacy and security amongst their top barriers to sharing more transport data

Our data provides guidance to help you understand if your data contains personal data, and the impact this may have

We also provide guidance around data privacy, and when you may need to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

The screenshot shows a web page from the UK Government's DfT Prototype. At the top, there's a black header with the 'GOV.UK' logo and 'DfT Prototype' text. Below this is a white banner with a blue 'PROTOTYPE' label and a disclaimer: 'This is a prototype and is only intended for research and experimentation.' The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Transport > Opening up local authority transport data'. The page title is 'Opening up local authority transport data' with a subtitle 'Considering privacy and security' and a note 'Updated'. A 'Print this page' link is visible. The main content area discusses privacy and security concerns as barriers to open data sharing, listing links for 'deciding whether your data includes personal data', 'data privacy', and 'security'. It then focuses on 'Deciding whether your data includes personal data', explaining that personal data is defined by UK-GDPR Article 4 (1) and listing examples like identifiers, personal numbers, and location data.

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Considering privacy and security

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Privacy and security concerns are a barrier to open data sharing. This section includes guidance about:

- [deciding whether your data includes personal data](#)
- [data privacy](#)
- [security](#)

Deciding whether your data includes personal data

You should check whether it is likely that your data set will include processing of any personal data.

Personal data is defined by [UK-GDPR Article 4 \(1\)](#) as "any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person".

Personal data includes:

- an identifier, e.g. a name, email address, phone number
- personal identification numbers, e.g. bank account, national insurance number
- factors specific to an individual's physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural, or social identity
- location data - data that has any kind of geographic position attached to it, e.g. data collected by wireless networks, swipe cards and smart mobile devices that provide location tracking, or vehicle registration numbers.
- online identifiers, e.g. mobile device IDs, browser cookies, IP addresses

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Data platforms

The engagement phase highlighted many misunderstandings about how to publish transport data

One of these was that your UTMC can be used as a data platform.

This page brings together best practice and examples of data sets that can be shared through your UTMC

It also offers guidance of the different services that the main UTMC suppliers can offer

We also provide guidance for publishing data via other data platforms

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Publishing your data on a data platform

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This section outlines the main steps for you to publish your data. The main steps are:

- [decide on your open data platform](#)
- [communicate with users](#)

Decide on your open data platform

To publish your data, you need a platform to publish from; options include [Urban Traffic Management and Control \(UTMC\)](#) systems or Smart City or sub-national transport body (STB) data platforms.

Using UTMC as your data platform

You should use the systems that you already have as the first option for publication. If you have a UTMC system, consider using UTMC as your data platform. There are official UTMC [specifications, guidance and good practice advice](#). This documentation covers establishing open data services, dealing with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and emerging technology (such as connected and automated vehicles).

UTMC systems support numerous devices and data types including:

- traffic signals via Urban Traffic Control (UTC)
- fault and asset management (integration to existing Remote Monitoring System (RMS) systems)
- variable message signs

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Conclusions

Conclusions & next steps

- › Sharing data is a good policy
- › Awareness about data needs improving
- › Mixed landscape with some positive stories and others less advanced
- › Leadership and collaboration in sharing data is needed
- › Guidance can address some (but not all) local authority pain points
- › Technology and guidance alone will not address all the pain points
- › The business case for sharing is not clear – has been difficult to find case studies

Next steps:

- › Guidance prototype website will be launched soon
- › To be hosted and modified if necessary based on user feedback
- › Potential to be a live repository of case studies



Thanks for listening!

Stephen.Nand-Lal@atkinsglobal.com

Graham.Hanson@dft.gov.uk

