

# Declaration and commitment statement to transparency

## Ambition

Barnet Council intends to set the gold standard for local government transparency.

We believe that council data is your data and we have a responsibility to:

- A) Keep it safe
- B) Make information about the borough and the council freely available
- C) Provide good quality and timely data
- D) Ensure our data is open and easy to use and understand.

Transparent open data is essential for accountability and we believe providing access to our data can empower individuals, the media, civil society and businesses to achieve better outcomes for themselves and for public services.

Our vision is to not only adhere, but to exceed the Local Government Transparency Code requirements.

## Reasons

### Releasing data for improved governance

The release of open data enables you to understand how the council works and contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes. It also strengthens our democratic institutions and encourages better decision-making to meet the needs of our residents.

### Releasing data for improved performance and efficiency

Publishing data freely means that the council's performance and spending and opportunities for improvement are visible, and supports 'armchair auditors' to hold us to account.

### Releasing data to build shared responsibility and partnership

Making Barnet a place of opportunity and success is a shared endeavour that relies on everyone having access to the same information about the challenges and opportunities we face.

### Releasing data to build trust

The council has a huge impact on those that live and work in Barnet and has to make vital decisions about how public funds are spent. Publishing data on this enables you to see how and why we make these decisions.

### Releasing data for innovation

Recognising the importance of diversity in stimulating creativity and innovation, the more people and organisations that use our data, the greater the social and economic benefits that will be generated. This is true for both commercial and non-commercial uses. Freely-available data can be used in innovative ways to create useful tools and products that help people navigate modern life more easily. Used in this way, open data is a catalyst for innovation in the private sector, supporting the creation of new markets, businesses and jobs.

## Principles

### Principle 1: open data by default

We will:

- establish an expectation that data will be published openly by default, while recognising that
- there are legitimate reasons why some data cannot be released, in particular pertaining to intellectual property, commercial sensitivity, personally-identifiable and sensitive information, which must be observed
- publish data on a portal so that all data released can be found easily in one place, free to access and re-use
- ensure that all data processing is compliant with any legal or contractual requirements including the Data Protection Act 1998.

### Principle 2: quality, quantity and timely

We will:

- release high-quality open data that is timely, comprehensive, and accurate. To the extent possible, data will be in the original and unmodified form. We will make sure that data is properly described, so that consumers have sufficient information to understand what the data is telling us and its strengths, weaknesses, analytical limitations of information and security requirements, as well as how to process the data
- release data as early as possible, allow users to provide feedback, and then continue to make revisions to ensure the highest standards of open data quality are met.

### Principle 3: usable by all

We will:

- release data in open formats wherever possible, ensuring that the data is available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes
- release as much data as possible, including providing data in multiple formats, so that it can be processed by computers and understood by people
- publish information in a form that allows all residents to make the most of the opportunities the borough offers.

#### Declaration

We, the London Borough of Barnet, agree that open data is an untapped resource with the potential to encourage the building of a stronger, better connected borough that better meets the needs of residents and allows innovation to flourish.

We therefore agree to follow the principles that will be the foundation for access to, and the release and re-use of, data made available by the London Borough of Barnet.