

London Borough of Havering Transparency and Open Data Charter

This charter sets out the key principles that underpin our commitment to being a transparent organisation that publishes data in open format.

What do we mean by transparency and why are we committed to it?

The London Borough of Havering spends public money to deliver services for local residents and businesses. But we do not just provide services for those within the borough. Anyone who attends school, travels on roads, does their shopping or uses leisure centres in Havering – no matter where they are from – is engaging with services, facilities or infrastructure which the council spends its money on.

As such, we are accountable to the public and one of the ways we can be more accountable is to be open and transparent about as many of our activities as possible.

In this context, transparency can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Being clear about how we are spending money
- Being clear about how decisions are made
- Being clear about the structure of the council

As such, we feel it is important that we are clear about how our work translates into everyday experiences for residents, businesses and visitors to the borough.

By being more open we hope to create a more inclusive democratic process and give the public the information they need to become more involved, active citizens.

What is open data and why are we committed to it?

[The Open Data Institute](#) defines open data as ‘data that anyone can access, use and share’. To be considered open, data should meet the following criteria:

- Published under an open licence that allows its use and re-use
- Published in a format that is machine readable and non-proprietary, i.e. it does not need specific, paid-for software to be consumed.

We aim to publish all data in [3* open format](#) where possible.

We aim to publish our data in open format to encourage its use in interesting and innovative ways and allow it to be readily combined with data from other local authorities. For this reason, we also make every attempt to use [standardised schemas](#) when publishing data so that it is more readily comparable with data from other local authorities.

By making our data ‘open by default’ we hope to provide a resource that can be used by third parties for a number of purposes, including to generate knowledge and insight about the borough, inform business decisions and aid comparison of our performance with other local councils.

What will we publish?

We provide data about both the borough and the council in line with the Local Government Transparency Code. Additional demographic information about the borough is also provided through the Data Intelligence Hub <https://www.haveringdata.net/>

Being transparent and publishing open data in no way challenges our commitment to privacy. We remain as committed as ever to data protection and work vigilantly to protect personal and commercially sensitive data.

To this end we have put in place measures to ensure that all appropriate data are checked for compliance with appropriate legislation by a specialist team before being made publically available.

We do not believe that the potential identification of inefficiencies and subsequent “embarrassment” for the council is reason to keep data unpublished. Quite the opposite: we view our transparency as an opportunity to work collaboratively with the public to identify areas where we can improve our work and, in doing so, deliver better services and more value for money.

If data are unreliable or incomplete then they are of limited use. We therefore work hard across the council to ensure that our data are accurate, up-to-date and complete (although we cannot guarantee complete coverage and accuracy). As this can be a painstaking process we prioritise the publication of data that we believe will be most useful for end users.

How will we publish our data?

We aim to provide most of our data on one page on the Council’s website so that it is convenient and easy to find. The link is provided below.

https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20044/council_information/143/council_transparency_information

Unless otherwise stated, we will publish our data under an Open Government Licence in order to provide for its free use and re-use. Users should take note of exceptions to this rule and consult the appropriate licences for data where specified.