# Declaration on Open and Transparent Government Policy

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| Policy Owner: | Chief Information Officer |
| Date approved: | June 2024 |
| Next review date: | June 2027 |
| Document number: | 5554579 |
| Required by legislation: | N/A |

## 1    Purpose

1.1 To provide a regionally consistent approach to releasing data under an open data umbrella aligning with the direction set through the Government's Open and Transparent Government Policy, New Zealand Government Open Access Licensing Framework (NZ GOAL), and commitment to the International Open Data Charter.

## 2    Definitions

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| **Valor** (Valor Appraisal and Advisory Limited): | Is a professional and independent firm providing Valuation, Risk Advisory and ESG Advisory services for Waikato District Council. The contract is managed by Finance. The valuation roll is a dataset protected by commercial sensitivity, see SVDS. |
| **SVDS:** | The Shared Valuation Data Service (SVDS) is a real time, online, property database containing the District Valuation Rolls and associated registers of the participating councils in the Waikato Region. For further details refer to the Shared Valuation Data Service (SVDS) managed by Co-Lab (colabsolutions.govt.nz). |
| **ALGIM:** | Association of Local Government Information Management which is owned by councils and provides leadership to the local government sector through best practice toolkits, advocacy, research, auditing, and shared services |
| **NZGOAL:** | The New Zealand Government Open Access and Licensing framework (NZGOAL) is all-of-government guideline for agencies to follow when releasing copyright works and non-copyright/public domain material for reuse by others. Further information is available through the Data.govt.nz website - NZGOAL (New Zealand Government Open Access and Licensing) framework - data.govt.nz |

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| **Declaration of Open and Transparent Government:** | The Declaration on Open and Transparent Government was approved by Cabinet on 8 August 2011 and through this declaration the government commits to actively releasing high value public data.  Further information is available through the Data.govt.nz website - https://www.data.govt.nz/toolkit/policies/declaration-on-open-and-transparent-government/ |
| **New Zealand Data and Information Principles:** | Principles for managing data and information held by the New Zealand Government, passed by Cabinet in August 2011 through Cabinet Minute CAB Min (11) 29/12. |

## 3    Application

3.1 This policy applies to all employees and contractors of Waikato District Council (Council).

3.2 The policy also applies to Valor who have access to Valuation Roll data in accordance with the CoLab Solutions Shared Valuation Data Service. Valor and their access to Council data is managed by Council's Finance team.

## 4    Policy statements

4.1 Building on New Zealand's democratic tradition, the Waikato District Council commits to actively releasing high value public data[1] whilst also respecting privacy rights, as protected by the Privacy Act 2020.

4.2 Council holds data on behalf of the New Zealand public. We release it to enable the private and community sectors to use it to grow the economy, strengthen our social and cultural fabric, and sustain our environment.  We release it to encourage business and community involvement in Council's decision-making.

4.3 Council's approach to releasing data is consistent with the guidelines and objectives of the Open Government Information and Data Programme to support the adoption of the New Zealand Government Open Access and Licensing Framework (NZGOAL), the Declaration of Open and Transparent Government and the New Zealand Data and Information Principles, passed by Cabinet in August 2011.

4.4 Through this commitment, New Zealand citizens and businesses can expect a more efficient and accountable public sector, more services tailored to their needs, and a greater level of participation in shaping Council's decisions.

4.5 Releasing Council's data will help create the conditions that align central, regional and local government programmes and business initiatives.

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[1] Public data refers to non-personal and unclassified data.

4.6 By actively releasing taxpayer funded data we will assist educational, research, and scientific communities and the public to collaboratively build on existing data to gain new knowledge and apply it.

4.7 To support this declaration, Council asserts that the data and information it holds on behalf of the public must be open, trusted and authoritative, well managed, readily available, without charge where possible, and reusable, both legally and technically. Personal and classified data and information must be protected.

## 5    Policy review

5.1    This policy shall be evaluated and reviewed at least once every three years, or as deemed necessary by the Policy and Regulatory Committee.

**Appendix I**

**FAQ About Open Data**

**Why open data?**[2]

Local authorities have obligations under the Public Records Act 2005 to create and manage information and records. Also included in the Act are responsibilities for preserving and providing access to information and records of long-term, cultural and historical value. Information that has been created or received by a local authority in the course of its business is a public record.

The Declaration on Open and Transparent Government was approved by Cabinet in 2011. The declaration directs agencies to release high value public data, which is managed according to the New Zealand Data and Information Management Principles.

The Government has also adopted the International Open Data Charter principles, which support and build on the New Zealand Declaration on Open and Transparent Government and the supporting Data and Information Management Principles.

The benefits of open data are;

- improve government by increasing transparency
- build trust and confidence in government
- empower citizens so they can better participate in government decisions
- enable NZ to help solve global issues
- create new opportunities for citizens and organisations, by encouraging innovation and promoting economic growth and job creation
- solve public problems by giving citizens and policymakers access to data-driven evidence
- power government digital services.

**What data should or should not be open?**

Council aligns with the Association of Local Government Information Management's (ALGIM) Information Security Classification Guideline [3].

The ALGIM security classifications take into account the requirements of New Zealand legislation, international standards and industry best-practice. They are based, in

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[2] https://okfn.org/opendata/

[3] https://www.algim.org.nz/SB4-Information-Access-and-Security

particular, on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet CabGuide to ensure consistency in terminology across public sector entities.

Council will progressively release records which have an Unclassified Open Access security classification.

**Does this mean that we will release all data now?**

There is recognition that there is value to our communities in providing the transparent government that open data supports, and that personal and classified data and information must be protected in accordance with the obligations under the Privacy Act 2020."

It is also recognised that there is an investment required to enable the release of datasets and that this investment needs to be managed and appropriate.

Council will progressively release over a number of years datasets in a managed way aligning to this policy, the direction set by central government, and the applicable regulatory obligations. There are high value datasets and these have been prioritised for release ahead of lower value datasets.

**Where do we release our data sets to?**

At this stage data is released through the following:
- Waikato Local Authority Shared Services Data Portal - Co-Lab (colabsolutions.govt.nz)
- Government Data Portal – https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset
- OpenWaikato Portal - https://openwaikato.co.nz/for-business/economic-data/
- Waikato District Council Data Portal - https://data.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/
- Waikato District Council Mapping Portal - https://waikatodc.spatial.t1cloud.com/spatial/intramaps/?configId=e6b2fca7-5d63-4aed-b49c-c32dc8cb1002&project=Public
- Shared Valuation Data Service (SVDS) managed by Co-Lab Solutions.

A subset of data is provided to selected partner / vendors in accordance with the provisions within Council's supply agreements with each organisation, this includes:
- Citycare Limited
- Downer NZ
- Water Care Services Ltd
- Waikato Local Authority Shared Services Ltd (trading as Co-Lab Solutions)
- Valor Appraisal & Advisory Limited in accordance with the Shared Valuation Data Service (SVDS) managed by Co-Lab Solutions.

Over time as additional local, regional, and national solutions are identified additional data sharing solutions will be implemented.

**Are there any case studies where public data has been reused?**

See https://www.ict.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/case-studies/open-data/

**Other NZ open data resources:**
Open Government Information and Data Programme - https://www.data.govt.nz/open-data/open-data-nz/
New Zealand data and licensing framework (NZGOAL) - https://www.data.govt.nz/manage-data/policies/nzgoal/
The declaration of open and transparent government - https://www.data.govt.nz/manage-data/policies/declaration-on-open-and-transparent-government/
The New Zealand data and information principles - https://www.data.govt.nz/manage-data/policies/an-overview-of-new-zealand-data-and-information-principles/
Open and Transparent Government - https://www.ict.govt.nz/programmes-and-initiatives/open-and-transparent-government/
Data.govt.nz - https://data.govt.nz/