West Midlands Open Data Forum

Vision and Priorities

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

May 2022

Introduction

Over the last ten years, the West Midlands Open Data Forum (WMODF) has established itself as the premier location for all things open data in the West Midlands. However, during the pandemic, the Forum has become dormant, with the bimonthly meetings suspended; not least due to adjusted priorities by many stakeholders during the Pandemic.

We believe that the Forum is as important as ever, and has a unique role to play in the region; in a year when our region is host to the Commonwealth Games 2022.

Over the past few months, we have spoken to a number of stakeholders about what it is that the Forum can uniquely offer in a changed landscape – and have put together this set of proposals for a re-launch of the Forum later this year.

We would like to invite you to take a look at our proposals, and let us know whether these are the right priorities and outcomes. We will use your feedback and contributions to shape the future of the Forum.

Si and Chris
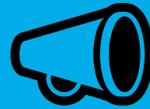West Midlands Open Data Forum Custodians
May 2022

www.wmodf.org.uk

Our mission

The **West Midlands Open Data Forum** (WMODF) promotes the release, re-use and integration of open data to benefit communities, businesses and public services in the West Midlands area, by...

championing public bodies that are innovating, using and releasing open data to improve their accountability to users and to improve the services they provide;

disseminating information, supporting events and assisting initiatives to harness open data and to connect users, developers and data providers to mutual benefit; and

sharing good practice and skills, guiding and reviewing the development of expertise, platforms and standards for the harnessing of open data.

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Vision & priorities

We believe the **mission** of the Forum remains fit for purpose. However, to achieve our mission, we need to make best use of our **unique selling proposition** as an independent organisation at the intersection of public sector organisations, universities, businesses, and community organisations. With this, we can achieve our vision for the **West Midlands to be the best place for open data** by:

	Championing public bodies that are innovating	Disseminating information	Sharing good practice
Acting as a community of practice to champion innovative data analytics, to identify winning approaches and share good practice.	✔		✔
Improving the training, development and profile of data scientists, data engineers and data analysts through opportunities and placements.		✔	✔
Creating mutual benefit by bringing technical expertise from our universities / businesses to community groups, public sector organisations and others.		✔	✔

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Theory of change

Challenge	Input	Output	Outcomes
Regional footprint: city-regions including London, Manchester, Bristol and Leeds all have more developed (or longer-established) partnerships for data analytics and open data. The WMODF can build on the pioneering work done by the West Midlands Office for Data Analytics to build capacity in our region.	By resuming regular in-person or hybrid meetings as a **community of practice** at different partner location, the Forum can function as a champion for open data at the intersection of different sectors in the West Midlands.	Forum members can share good practice of data analytics or open data with one another at a neutral, independent Forum; creating those moments of serendipity for innovation to occur, and shared interests to emerge.	The West Midlands has an active and thriving open data community. The West Midlands has a national and international profile as the best place for open data.
Skills shortage: data scientists, data engineers and data analysts are in high demand – public sector organisations and smaller businesses cannot compete with the salaries on offer from large private sector firms based in the region or elsewhere.	By bringing different sectors together, the Forum can address the shortage by identifying and creating opportunities for skills development and joint working.	The creation of local career pathways through job opportunities and funded placements in public sector and community organisations and small businesses.	The West Midlands is the **best place for data scientists, data engineers and data analysts** to develop their careers locally with opportunities to make a difference in all sectors of the economy. The West Midlands is levelling up, leading to social, economic and wellbeing improvements for our region.
Technical excellence: the potential of our universities and knowledge-intensive businesses across the West Midlands can be unleashed by integrating existing bilateral links into a multilateral approach.	Public sector organisations often have individual links with their local universities – the Forum can help develop this into a wider, multilateral approach, **creating mutual benefit** for all.	By bringing together our universities and knowledge-intensive businesses in our region with public sector organisations, we can ensure more organisations benefit from the technical expertise available to us in the region and build a data market place.	Universities and knowledge-intensive businesses have opportunities to make a difference to public sector organisations, small businesses, and community organisations.

Next steps

We would like to invite you to share your comments on our vision and priorities on the following online survey by 1 July 2022.

https://forms.office.com/r/5rtF4n1J4X