



## The Development and Maintenance Initiative (DMI) Advisory Panel Newsletter: May 2007

### 1.0 Setting the Scene

Welcome to the Information Commissioner's Office's DMI Advisory Panel Newsletter.

We'd like to start by thanking you for participation in the initiative. The workshops are progressing well, and many sectors are approaching the stage where we can begin to develop new model schemes.

Rather than providing a verbatim account of the discussions which took place within the second round of DMI workshops, this newsletter features the high-level issues of relevance to all sectors, which we hope will be of interest to the panel.

If you are interested in the work taking place within the individual workshop streams, various circulars drilling down to the sector specific issues are also available on our website [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk) as follows:

#### **General newsletter (all sectors)**

##### [Edition 1 February/March 2007](#)

#### **Edition 1**

**Circulars** (outlining the sector specific issues)

[Health Circular – edition 1 February/March 2007](#)

[Local Government Circular – edition 1 February/March 2007](#)

[Higher Education Circular - edition 1 March 2007](#)

[Central Government Circular - edition 1 April/May 2007](#)

[Non-Departmental Public Bodies Circular - edition 1 April/May 2007](#)

[Local Government Services Circular - edition 1 March/April 2007](#)

#### **Edition 2**

[Health Circular - edition 2 April/May 2007](#)

[Local Government Circular - edition 2 March/April 2007](#)

[Higher Education Circular - edition 2 April/May 2007](#)

## 2.0 The ICO's approach

### What high level changes are likely to result from the DMI?

In addition to the extension of the deadline for resubmission for all sectors until 2008 (which has already been implemented), the expected output of the initiative can be summarised as follows:

- A move towards the greater use of model schemes, with the development of core classes for each sector;
- Greater use of the web to disseminate information within schemes;
- The implementation of consistent maintenance and dissemination regimes for all sectors;
- The scheme is a commitment to the categories of information which will be routinely published, effort should be focused on the content of the scheme and how that can be routinely made available and easily accessed;
- A streamlined approval process.

## 3.0 The current status of the DMI

### How are the workshops progressing?

Workshops for most sectors are nearing completion. Workshops have been held for the following sectors:

Health

Education

Police

Local Government (we are running 2 workshops for this sector)

Local Government Services (including fire authorities, parish councils, transport executives etc)

Central Government

Non Departmental Public Bodies

Workshops are taking place in London, Manchester, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For those bodies which are not directly participating in the workshops, consultation via post or email is encouraged. We are conscious that certain 'layers' of authority within some sectors are under-represented (for example the education sector workshop is made up of higher and further education institutions), and are intending targeted consultation to include those other authorities and bodies in the initiative.

## 4.0 What happens next?

The third and fourth workshops will be focussing on the dissemination and maintenance of schemes. Three key messages emanating from the publication scheme review are to be highlighted:

- In the early days of implementation (prior to the general rights of access), it was acceptable for schemes to meet the minimum requirements of [Section 19](#). In 2005 the focus shifted towards the general access rights, and publication schemes have been largely ignored.
- The maintenance of schemes is haphazard. This is compounded by the current approval process which does not encourage or support systematic maintenance.
- Public awareness of schemes is low, and members of the public find some schemes difficult to use.
- Authorities want schemes which are less bureaucratic and more customer orientated.

We will be discussing with public authorities those best practice policies and procedures around the dissemination and maintenance of publication schemes that encourage and further proactive dissemination of information.

### **How will schemes be developed?**

As authorities' experience of request handling has developed, it is clear that the current approach should be reconsidered. Schemes need to be developed in a more holistic way, using more sophisticated methods of dissemination. Emphasis needs to be placed on regular and systematic maintenance. In order to illustrate the approach the ICO intends to take, a diagram outlining the relationship between the publication scheme and the actual delivery of information to the public has been created. This is contained in Annexe 1.

Schemes should be regarded as a driver for openness and transparency and as a tool for establishing trust between the public and authorities.

In addition to supporting the development of schemes via the DMI, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will develop a more straightforward and less bureaucratic approval process.

The policy and practices developed from the workshops will clearly create workload implications for some authorities. The ICO recognises that a balance between driving the change necessary for proactive dissemination and creating an unrealistic burden is needed. In addition, there is recognition that resource will dictate the level to which proactive dissemination is possible.

By creating high level classes rather than lists of information, duplication of effort in respect of the development of websites and publication schemes should be avoided. This will be supported further by encouraging autonomy in the delivery of information.

Checks and balances will need to be built into the new system to encourage the maximum disclosure of (appropriate) information. The ICO will explore the possibility of auditing proactive dissemination.

Workshops will be completed by mid July. By this stage, it is hoped that initial draft schemes will be available for consultation. Some early drafts are illustrated as part of the edition 2 sector circulars (as listed on page 1).

Once feedback on the draft schemes is collated, work will begin on the creation of the final models. The model schemes will be contained within sector packs which will include best practice advice on development, implementation and maintenance of publication schemes within public authorities across each sector.

At the same time work on raising public awareness and the creation of a new, more straightforward and less bureaucratic approval system will take place within the ICO.



# Annexe 1

## Development and Maintenance Initiative

### Delivering information

✓ The 'publication scheme'

✘ Intermediate information management tools

🖨 Delivery to the public

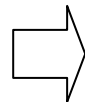
This is legally required and forms the charter or commitment to publish information.

This element must be submitted to ICO for approval and will take the form of a model or bespoke scheme.

The requirements for Section 19:

- Classes
- Manner
- Fees

The ICO will approve the high level, generic commitment to provide information within certain 'classes'. The public authority will manage the individual documents/pieces of information which fall into those classes. The authority will have autonomy over how the information is delivered.



These are the support mechanisms which translate the commitment to publish information set out in the scheme into tangible results. They animate the 'classes' of information set out in the scheme to ensure the effective delivery of information to the end users.

They may take the form of document lists; metadata or taxonomies such as the Local Government Classification List or the HE Business Classification Scheme. Electronic document and content management tools may also feature. For smaller authorities, the publication scheme may be so prescriptive that this intermediate level isn't required.

In order to relate the information within 'classes' to that which is actually delivered to the public, the authority will need manage the relationship between the two. The ICO will not require sight or approval of the intermediate management systems.



Authorities may deliver the information to the public in whatever medium they see fit. However it is likely to be predominantly web focussed for large authorities.

Hard copies and the opportunity to inspect information in situ will still feature. In small authorities this will remain the primary vehicle for information dissemination.

The public facing element of the scheme may adopt whichever format and language the public authority sees fit – it will not be necessary to refer to the 'publication scheme' or 'classes'. In many cases, the public will access information without realising that it is contained within a publication scheme class.

