



# **Tracing the impacts of public dialogue projects supported by Sciencewise:**

## **Open Data**

**March 2016**

<b>Open Data</b>	
<p><b>Key facts</b></p> <p><b>Date</b> December 2011 – June 2012 (7 months)</p> <p><b>Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total cost of project: £ 58,800</li> <li>• Sciencewise funding: £ 28,800</li> </ul> <p><b>Commissioned by</b> Research Councils UK</p>	<p><b>Delivery</b> TNS-BMRB</p> <p><b>Evaluation</b> OPM</p> <p><b>Sciencewise Dialogue and Engagement Specialist (DES)</b> Daniel Start</p>
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>This public dialogue project was established by Research Councils UK, the Royal Society and JISC to provide public insight and feedback on how open data principles and policies around research should be developed and practised.</p>	
<p><b>The dialogue project in summary</b></p> <p>The background context for the Open Data dialogue project included Government commitments to openness and transparency, and new developments in the potential for combining and sharing data from publicly funded research. For example, in May 2010, the Prime Minister announced the Government’s commitments on transparency; in July 2011, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that commitment and outlined plans for further transparency in the future. The commitments in 2011 were made on the basis that <i>“transparency and open data can be a powerful tool to help reform public services, foster innovation and empower citizens. We also understand that transparency can be a significant driver of economic activity, with open data increasingly enabling the creation of valuable new services and application”</i><sup>1</sup>. Government activities in this area were supported by the Public Sector Transparency Board; in October 2012, the Board published a set of Transparency Principles<sup>2</sup>. Open Data was also one of the themes within the Government’s Growth Review.</p> <p>More generally, advances in technology have increased the potential to re-use and combine public datasets to create new and innovative information services and products, both commercial and non-commercial, and including the re-use of data generated from publicly funded research. There are moral, social and economic arguments for making research data open to others, but there are also legal, ethical and commercial constraints on the release of research data. The Open Access Implementation Group (OAIG), whose members included the Research Councils UK and JISC had made an early commitment to open access to the outputs from publicly funded research.</p> <p>In 2011, the Royal Society launched a working group on Science as a Public Enterprise, chaired by Sir Geoffrey Boulton. The study aimed to identify the principles, opportunities and problems of sharing and disclosing scientific information and considered how scientific information should be managed to support innovative and productive research that reflects public values: <i>“There has been an exponential growth in the rate of accumulation of scientific information through new methods of acquisition, manipulation and storage of data. Citizens increasingly want to interrogate scientific findings that have the potential for major impacts on their lives.”</i><sup>3</sup></p> <p>Alongside the working group, the Royal Society worked with Research Councils UK and JISC to develop and run a public dialogue, supported by Sciencewise. The dialogue was designed to provide public insights and feedback on future data openness, data re-use, data management technologies and data management policies across the research councils and beyond. The focus of the dialogue was on the use of data in research (to include physical, biological, engineering, mathematical, health and medical, natural and social disciplines, and research in the arts and humanities). ‘Data’ included raw observational data, cleaned or processed data, meta-data, models, clinical trial data and Government records.</p> <p>The dialogue was expected to build on and connect with a wide range of related initiatives. It was expected to build on and work with the draft recommendations from the Royal Society working group, and for the results of the dialogue to feed into the final conclusions of the Royal Society study. For the Research Councils, the expectation was that the dialogue would impact their policies on access to publicly funded research data and other cross council policy agendas</p>	

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/letter-to-cabinet-ministers-on-transparency-and-open-data>

<sup>2</sup> [https://data.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Public%20Data%20Principles\\_For%20Data.Gov%20%281%29\\_10.pdf](https://data.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Public%20Data%20Principles_For%20Data.Gov%20%281%29_10.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/science-public-enterprise/>

bearing on issues of public confidence, trust and transparency. It was also expected to inform developments in other funders and policy makers such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The dialogue was also expected to build on previous work by Sciencewise on Science, Trust and Public Engagement<sup>4</sup>, also with the Royal Society; one of the case studies within this earlier project was open data and climate science transparency<sup>5</sup>.

The aim of the public dialogue project was to provide public insight and feedback on how open data principles and policies around research should be developed and practised. The specific objectives of the project were to:

- Work with major UK research funders to provide public insight and feedback on future data openness, data reuse and data management policy options
- Engage key policy stakeholders to clarify the range of issues and options in policy going forward, related to the conclusions of the Science as a Public Enterprise (SAPE) Royal Society working group
- Build on previous studies and work alongside relevant working groups/task forces recently established by government, to help shape future research data policy within the UK's main funding institutions
- Explore wider ethical and moral issues related to open data and data reuse
- Engage business on some of the issues relevant to privately and joint-funded research.

The pharmaceutical industry was used as an example business sector for this project: the policy director at GlaxoSmithKline was a member of the Steering Group for the dialogue project. There were also links to business interests represented on the SAPE working group

The main elements of the public dialogue project were:

- **A Steering Group** was established to agree the scope of the public dialogue. This group was formed of representatives from: BIS Government Office for Science, HEFCE Joint Information Systems Councils (Digital Infrastructure), Academy of Medical Sciences, GlaxoSmithKline, the Wellcome Trust, Royal Society, Natural Environmental Research Council (Research Outputs Network), Research Councils UK and Sciencewise. It was chaired by Research Councils UK's Head of Strategy.
- **Public workshops** were held in Oldham and Swindon; each workshop was repeated a month later with the same participants. A total of 39 public participants took part. Most workshops were also attended by members of the Steering Group and other specialists. The participants considered a number of examples of open data and two case studies (NHS data and data about climate change) and considered principles around open data. Between the workshops, participants were asked to speak to their friends and family about the issues, and to look at news items etc.) and consider where data openness may or may not be helpful.

Participants were recruited to reflect the profile of the local area and as such were a mix of ages, ethnicities, socio-economic groups and genders.

- **Stakeholder workshop.** Between the two sets of public workshops, a stakeholder workshop was held to help develop case studies and scenarios for the second set of public workshops. Stakeholders from 33 organisations attended, representing a range of research funders, journalists/press and researchers. The organisations comprised a mixture of larger business, policymakers (from central government and science organisations), NGOs, charities and interest groups and universities.

The key findings<sup>6</sup> from the dialogue showed:

- On balance, public participants believed that there should be active publication of publicly funded or public-interest data. Data were believed to be in the public interest when they provided a direct utility or benefit defined largely in terms of data that could help improve human health and, to a lesser extent, the environment, and did not impact on national security. In addition, the public were concerned that data should not be released too early or in a way that would be likely to promote poor decision-making or do harm. Consent and, in particular, confidentiality around personal data were also prominent public concerns.
- The public participants outlined three broad governance arrangements that needed to be developed in relation to whether data is in the public interest:
  - For research where data was not considered in the public interest: participants were content for 'self governance', where other researchers and funders, who have technical knowledge and understanding, would oversee open data practices
  - For research where data had public interest implications: participants wanted a wider range of specialists (e.g. ethicists, lawyers, economists, Non-Governmental Organisations) to be involved in data governance

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/science-trust-and-public-engagement/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/science-trust-public-engagement-open-data-and-climate-science-transparency/>

<sup>6</sup> Text on key findings from Sciencewise case study

- For research where data had public interest implications that included personal information: in addition to other specialists, the lay public should also be involved. In certain instances (e.g. medical datasets) regulations should also govern this area.
- The public participants also identified eight key principles that could be used to promote more effective open-data policies:
  - Publically funded data should be open, unless not in the public interest
  - With private or co-funded data there was a right not to disclose, unless in the public interest
  - Researchers should be allowed a short period of exclusive access to data to create value
  - Personal data should be confidential, and consent gained for future use
  - Anyone reusing public data should acknowledge the source
  - Data openness should be governed through an independent group
  - Data should be checked for inaccuracies before being made open
  - Raw data should include full details explaining what the data relates to, how it was collected, who collected it, and how formatted.

#### Dissemination of dialogue results

- In March 2012, the summary findings were presented to the Administrative Data Taskforce, chaired by Sir Alan Langlands, to feed into the Taskforce report to Ministers in December 2012 on the wider use of administrative data for research and policy purposes.
- The project report<sup>7</sup> of the dialogue was published on the Research Councils UK's and Sciencewise websites in June 2012. The evaluation report<sup>8</sup> was published at the same time.
- The results from the dialogue and report were shared with the Royal Society working group on Science as a Public Enterprise.
- In February 2013, Sciencewise presented the Open Data dialogue project and results as a case study in a session with around 30 participants at the annual Government Science and Engineering (GSE) network conference.

#### Impacts on policy

- **June 2012.** The Royal Society report 'Science as an Open Enterprise'<sup>9</sup> was published; this was the report of the working group with the earlier title of Science as a Public Enterprise. Although the results from the dialogue were not published in time to be formally taken into account before the completion of the Royal Society's study, the dialogue report is referenced in the group's final report and the dialogue results influenced subsequent Royal Society work. The report's conclusions reflect similar views and priorities to the dialogue results. For example:
 

*"Open access to scientific information is not in practice an unqualified good. A commitment to open science does not imply openness to everything, to anyone or for any purpose. Open science should be bounded by considerations of quality, legitimate commercial interests, privacy and security. This study made recommendations as to how to best to ensure we obtain the benefits of opening up scientific information, and how best to manage the challenges and financial implications of so doing."*
- **2012.** The dialogue results were used by Research Councils UK to inform its data policies, which were revised in 2012. In particular, the work had a direct influence on the work of the Research Councils' Research Outputs Network, which co-ordinates cross-council policy on access and use of research outputs and data (including across the Higher Education Funding Councils - HEFCs).
- **October 2012.** GlaxoSmithKline was represented on the Oversight Group, and provided a specialist perspective at two workshops. In mid-October 2012, the company announced plans to provide greater access to trial data. Researchers will be able to request access to anonymised patient-level trial data for further research and requests will be reviewed by an Independent Panel, which will include a lay member of the public. The experience of the Open Data project (and other dialogue projects) demonstrated how the public can engage on this topic and influenced the thinking of the staff member involved in developing the GSK initiative.
- **December 2012.** The Administrative Data Taskforce (ADT) published its report on making administrative data more widely available for research and policy purposes<sup>10</sup>. The dialogue results had been presented in person to the March 2012 meeting of the ADT, which had been formed in 2011 by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Project-files/TNSBMRBRUCUKOpendatareport.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Project-files/RCUKOpendataevaluation.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/science-public-enterprise/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/research/administrative-data-taskforce-adt/improving-access-for-research-and-policy/>

Medical Research Council (MRC) and Wellcome Trust, and chaired by Sir Alan Langlands. The ADT included members from Department for Education (DfE), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Department of Health (DH), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Office for National Statistics (ONS), Cabinet Office, NHS Information Centre (NHS IC), the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Government Office for Science, and the Scottish and Welsh governments.

The ADT aimed to examine the best procedures and mechanisms to make administrative data available for research safely. Although not referenced directly in the report, those involved confirmed that the dialogue had some influence at a general level on the ADT conclusions, alongside an expert report that fed into the report's chapter on 'A Strategy for Engaging with the Public'.

The five recommendations from the ADT included "*Recommendation 4 – A strategy for engaging with the public should be instituted*". Beyond raising awareness and consultation, the report called for procedures that also considered "*the roles that members of the public could play in decision-making regarding the administrative data to be accessed and linked.*" The recommendation also proposed that each Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC) – another recommendation in the ADT's report – should appoint a public engagement and communications officer "*to lead engagement with a wide audience and promoting dialogue about the research benefits that could accrue, the safeguards that are required to prevent any misuse of data and how both could be effectively and collaboratively achieved*"; ADRCs were also expected to "*produce plans for public engagement*". (emphasis added)

- **April 2013.** Paul Maltby, the Government's Director of Open Data and Transparency at the Cabinet Office, was interviewed for the Civil Service World newsletter published on 2 April 2013. The original article included a box which referenced the open data dialogue as a case study, and included the following quote from David Willetts on the dialogue report:

*"This report demonstrates why it is so important to engage the public in policy development and shows a clear understanding of the issues surrounding use of research data. It will make an important contribution to the work being done by Government, research funding bodies and other organisations on opening up access to research findings."* Rt Hon David Willetts MP, then Minister for Universities and Science.

- **June 2013.** The Government response<sup>11</sup> to the ADT's report was published. The Government response to the recommendation on public engagement recognised that "*The public acceptability of releasing linked de-identified data for research and statistical purposes in a controlled environment will be central to the success of this work going forward.*" The response also accepted that "*The role of public engagement and the debate around the use and reuse of linked de-identified administrative data will need to be co-ordinated across the network.*"
- **28 August 2013.** Research Councils UK sent an update to all the public dialogue participants, to inform them about how the dialogue results had been used. The update included the following:

*"Within RCUK the dialogue results have been useful to inform our open data policy, this is timely as we are currently reviewing our existing policies to identify areas where further alignment or development is needed. RCUK are supportive of the principles, and it is encouraging that the existing RCUK data policy is broadly in line with the feedback from the public who took part in the workshops. The position on co-funded data (ii) is more complex as it can be subject to the legislation on Freedom of Information and Data Protection but the status of research data is currently under consideration by parliament. We are also giving considerable thought to how we ensure the governance and quality of research data (vi, vii). The RCUK policy in this area will be significant in making accessible any data that arises from the £3 billion invested annually by RCUK in research."*

*"Research Councils UK was represented on the Research Sector Transparency Board (chaired by the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, the [then] Minister for Universities and Science), which advises the government on how to increase access to research data. The dialogue results were fed into the Board's work."*

- **10 October 2013.** The Rt Hon David Willetts MP, then Minister for Universities and Science, announced<sup>12</sup> the recipients of the first phase of the ESRC's £64 million funding of investment in Big Data. This included the four new Administrative Data Research Centres, as recommended in the ADT's report. The centres, and other initiatives, were to form the new Administrative Data Research Network.

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/206873/bis-13-920-government-response-administrative-data-taskforce.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/206873/bis-13-920-government-response-administrative-data-taskforce.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/news/news-items/the-big-data-family-is-born-david-willetts-mp-announces-the-esrc-big-data-network/>

- **4 December 2013.** Steven Hill, Head of policy at HEFCE, formerly at Research Councils UK and Chair of the Oversight Group for the dialogue, contributed a blog<sup>13</sup> to the Sciencewise website on the open data dialogue, reflecting on the dialogue one year on. The blog included the following:

*"Broadly speaking policy in this area is dominated by one of two voices. One the one hand there are the open data advocates ... The other group are the open data sceptics ... The message from the public dialogue is that we need to find a path between these extremes ... The key benefit from this public dialogue for me is the way in which the findings challenge the extreme positions and encourage us, as policy makers, to find an appropriate balance between competing interests. I think this is a benefit of public dialogue in general. Far from leaving decisions to experts, good policy making needs to encompass a broad range of views to get the best of outcomes."*

*"Looking back on the dialogue I continue to be struck by the sophistication of the view that emerged. Although the dialogue was small scale and gave the participants limited time to explore a complex and relatively abstract topic, the findings challenge many of the assumptions made by policy commentators."*

- **January 2014.** Research for the Sciencewise Evaluation update 2014 was completed, which included new evaluation research and interviews on the longer term impacts of public dialogue projects that had been supported by Sciencewise, including the Open Data dialogue. Several interviewees stressed the value of the Open Data dialogue:

*"For me, the most important finding was the level of sophistication with which the public approached the issues"* (Open Data Oversight Group, interviewee 1)

*"The major risk is that at some point the public gets spooked on data sharing and we need to understand the public point of view ... Parliament and other constituencies are really influenced by the privacy lobbies and get really agitated and this is a real danger ... look at the difference in public understanding and attitudes towards GM as compared with stem cells - in the first the public dialogue got out of control, and we got it right with the latter and now have a world lead in the area."* (Open Data Oversight Group, interviewee 1)

*"Most striking was the balanced position of public participants that they came to in the course of the dialogue. It was extremely positive that through the dialogue process we got quite a balanced view"* (Open Data Oversight Group, interviewee 4)

- **January 2014.** The Royal Society convened an Open Research Data Forum<sup>14</sup>, following a meeting at the Royal Society to follow up the findings and recommendations of the report Science as an Open Enterprise (which was linked to the original public dialogue). The forum is made up of individuals representing funders, universities and research institutes, learned societies, libraries, publishers, and a range of other bodies that provide technical expertise relating to research data. The first meeting of the Forum, in January 2014, identified four key principles – which are similar to the principles that resulted from the public dialogue.

That first meeting also agreed that a concordat on open data could be a powerful tool in helping to accelerate culture change, and that it needed to be taken forward as a partnership between funders (including research councils, funding councils and bodies such as JISC). By October 2014, at the second meeting of the Forum<sup>15</sup>, it was reported that a draft concordat was being prepared for discussion by a group of representatives of funders, research institutions and others who had met twice since the idea was raised at the first Forum meeting. It was agreed that a revised version of the concordat would be circulated to the Forum.

- **July 2015.** Research Councils UK launched an open consultation on the draft Concordat on Open Research Data<sup>16</sup>, on behalf on the working group developing the Concordat. The consultation sought feedback on any aspects of the concordat and the value it may have for the UK, and wider, research community. The deadline for comments on the draft Concordat was September 2015.

The new Concordat aims to help to ensure that the research data gathered and generated by members of the UK research community is made openly available for use by others wherever possible in a manner consistent with relevant legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks and norms. It aims to establish a set of expectations of good practice with the intention of establishing open research data as the desired position for publicly-funded research over the long-term. It recognises the different responsibilities of researchers, their employers, and funders of research, however, it is not the intention of the concordat to mandate, codify or require specific activities.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/open-data-striking-the-right-balance-in-policy/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.researchinfonet.org/research-data/open-research-data-forum/>; <http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Jan-2014-Forum-Report.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Oct-2014-meeting-note.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/opendata/>



The links between the dialogue and the Concordat have been confirmed by RCUK and the Chair of the dialogue Steering Group:

*“The open data Concordat working group was convened, chaired by the then Chair of RCUK, which has been putting together a research sector concordat around the principles of open data with the funders and also universities. I know the dialogue has been one of the evidence strands that has contributed to that. That is in the final throes of drafting and agreement at the moment.” (RCUK, interviewed February 2016).*

*“In terms of my organisation, the dialogue project has been an underpinning set of evidence that has informed our contributions to the open data concordat work and a lot of the findings have fed through in to the principles of that concordat.” (Chair, dialogue steering group; member of Concordat working group; interviewed February 2016)*

*“The most recent and most significant development on the whole open data policy area has been the development of the concordat on open data. That is a collaborative effort between funders and also research universities to develop a set of principles around open data and that went out for classical consultation in the autumn and is being finalised now. ... many of the principles draw very strongly on some of the findings of the dialogue, so a principle around openness being the default but set against that some requirements to restrict access to data depending on privacy concerns or concerns of participants in studies and so on is the main area. That concordat is going to inform the research councils’ revision of their data policy and will be the bedrock of their policy development in the future.” (Chair, dialogue steering group; member of Concordat working group; interviewed February 2016)*

- **As at February 2016.** Both Research Councils UK and the Chair of the dialogue Steering Group also confirmed the value of the Open Data dialogue more generally in policy around open data:

*“The key conclusion for me out of the dialogue which I think has been influential is that the public that were involved in that dialogue developed quite nuanced views about open data. It wasn’t a black and white ‘the public think this, the public think that’ type of outcome, it was a much more complicated and useful sense of the variation in public views and the subtlety of public opinion on that basis, which I don’t think you’d have ever got out of a classical consultation approach. I think that’s been useful in setting the context to policy makers in this area.” (Chair, dialogue steering group; member of Concordat working group; interviewed February 2016)*

*“This was a useful piece of work in a very early stage policy area. In a tricky, politically charged, personally charged area it has allowed us to gauge where people are with the whole open data issue and input in to high level discussions and the creation of policy in a way that is sympathetic to people’s views without second guessing them and going for maybe a more risk averse approach or being a bit too passionate about something and getting it totally wrong. So it has allowed us to be much more knowledgeable about the true picture out there, giving us a window in to what people really do think- or that that sample of people at least - in order to devise policy that is credible and will help, hopefully, hit the mark with people.” (RCUK, interviewed February 2016).*

### Impacts on Research Councils UK and others

- **March 2014.** In 2013, the ESRC collaborated with the Office for National Statistics to run a further series of public dialogues<sup>17</sup> across the UK to better understand how people view using and linking administrative data for research. The report<sup>18</sup> on the dialogues was published in March 2014. These new dialogues explored attitudes around the re-use of sensitive data, mandatory and voluntary data collection and long-term data storage and data linking, and, specifically, examined the re-use of public data for research purposes. These dialogues have started to inform the ESRC and ONS strategies and also the Administrative Data Research Centres (ADRCs) and Administrative Data Service. The Sciencewise Dialogue and Engagement Specialist (DES) who supported the original dialogue in 2011 was part of the Steering Group for these new dialogues.
- **As of February 2016.** RCUK remained convinced of the value of the dialogue in relation to their work on open data and more generally:

*“The Open Data dialogue has been held up as a particularly good example for public engagement so I am sure it will have had some knock on effects.” (Research Councils UK, February 2016)*

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/public-engagement/public-dialogues/public-dialogues-on-using-administrative-data/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/public-engagement/public-dialogues/dialogue-on-data-exploring-the-public-s-views-on-using-linked-administrative-data-for-research-purposes/>

*“As the research councils and research funders, we use and encourage our researchers to do public dialogue in most areas of the research that we fund... We see public dialogue as a very helpful form as it is a methodology that can really positively engage people with some of the research that’s going on. We encourage some of our researchers to embed it in their research approach in order to help direct the research they’re doing.”*  
(Research Councils UK, February 2016)

*“Public dialogue is a methodology that we would use again and encourage others to use because it is getting more in depth insight than some more surface level public engagement tools that you might use. This one is much more in depth.”* (Research Councils UK, February 2016)

- **As of February 2016.** The former Chair of the Oversight Group has also remained convinced of the value of the dialogue on open data and the dialogue approach more generally:

*“You get a rounded and quite complex view ... you get a sense of the diversity of opinion and the shades of grey between the extreme views. That is a huge advantage and that’s why dialogue is worth doing and why it is different from consultation ... that advantage can be quite a challenge because you have to think how do we recognise this diversity of views? ... So it gives a policy maker a challenge in terms of decision making. But I would say a good challenge in that you are acting from a position of strong information and knowledge.”*  
(Chair, dialogue steering group, interviewed February 2016)

*“[Dialogue] does allow you to explore in detail and at some level of subtlety what public views are and to explore the diversity of public views. The other advantage from a policy perspective (although this applies to other types of dialogue, not just about policy matters), when you seek views through consultation, you get a set of views from people already interested in the issue. It is very hard to get a sense of what the actual majority of people who aren’t even thinking about the issue on a day to day basis, what they actually think. That’s a big advantage, you get to use not a representative sample but at least a sample that isn’t self-selecting having already made up their mind one way or the other. So I think there are lots of advantages or using dialogue. If I was working in an area that was dealing with a controversial technology or regulation of a controversial technology I would be pushing to use these dialogues all the time.”* (Chair, dialogue steering group, interviewed February 2016)

*“Dialogue is quite distinct in that it is more of a qualitative process than consultation and I’m not sure that is always understood. But in the last few years with the open policy making agenda within government I think the credibility of dialogue is going up steadily.”* (Chair, dialogue steering group, interviewed February 2016)

### Subsequent Sciencewise activities

Since the Open Data dialogue was completed, Sciencewise has undertaken a number of other dialogue project and other activities around the topic:

- **April 2014.** ‘Public views on Open Data’<sup>19</sup>. This report provides an analysis of key messages and trends; and gives an overview of possible gaps in current knowledge about what the public think of open data and why.
- **January 2015** ‘Data policy and the public: shaping a deeper conversation’<sup>20</sup>. This drew on her secondment from the Sciencewise team to the Cabinet Office data science team from 30 September 2014 to 26 March 2015.
- **September 2015.** Sciencewise piloted a new mechanism for faster online dialogue with public participants – a Sounding Board<sup>21</sup>. The first pilot of the Sounding Board was for BIS and the Department for Education on the potential for Joining Education, Earnings and Employment Data. The project was completed in February 2016 and will be reporting in the summer 2016.
- **December 2015.** The Government Digital Service, within the Cabinet Office, has commissioned a new public dialogue on data science ethics<sup>22</sup>, with Sciencewise support. The Government Data Science Partnership is developing an ethical framework for the Government use of data science which will give data scientists, policymakers and operational staff the confidence to use data innovatively which respecting people’s privacy. The dialogue is expected to report in April / May 2016.

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28 March 2016

<sup>19</sup> <http://sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/SocialIntelligenceBigData.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Data-policy-and-the-publicJan-2015.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/digital-public-engagement-lessons-from-the-sounding-board/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/public-dialogue-on-data-science-ethics/>