

# Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service seeks harmony

## Summary

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has harmonised the address data it uses in preparation for the forthcoming FiReControl project. It has brought all local organisations over to sole use of the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

## Key learnings

- Early outreach work created close partnership working between the fire service and local councils which ensured success in the project later.
- Part of the project's success was an appreciation that different partners work with different practices and have differing requirements.
- The project was given high level approval and became part of the corporate plan, thus securing adequate resources.

## Background to the authority

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) is responsible for delivering the fire and rescue services to the 700,000 citizens of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Headquartered in Huntingdon, CFRS operates from 28 fire stations.

Councils within the CFRS area include:

- Cambridge City Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Peterborough City Council.

## Who was involved?

- Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service's business information manager
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) custodians in Cambridgeshire's councils.

## The problems and how we tackled them

In 2007 it was announced that the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) would be one of the main datasets for the FiReControl project. This will replace the current 46 standalone fire and rescue service control rooms in England with nine nationally networked Regional Control Centres (RCCs). The project is led by Communities and Local Government.

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) were quick to investigate how to reconcile its address data with the NLPG. The CFRS business information manager was already familiar with the NLPG. They also knew the local council custodians through attending their bi-annual meetings.

CFRS started an outreach project with the six district councils in its area of operation. This made sure that all council LLPG custodians understood how the fire service operated, emphasising the importance of good addressing data. This was needed both for community safety and the assessment of commercial risk.

Another aspect of this project was to achieve senior management buy-in, securing the resources necessary to complete the project. This was done by the development of a robust business case with identified stages, deliverables and key benefits.

As a result of the outreach initiative, CFRS began working closely with Huntingdonshire District Council in 2007. The process was started by matching Huntingdonshire's LPPG against data held by the fire service. Both organisations benefited considerably from this partnership approach. Both gained new and richer information about properties in Cambridgeshire.

The business case was successfully made. Late in 2007 CFRS made the decision to adopt the NLPG corporately to fall in line with the FiReControl project. Work started in January 2008 by which time two-way working relationships had already been established with council gazetteer custodians and the fire service.

Because the data matching exercise had high-level backing in the CFRS corporate plan, resources were made available to facilitate the process. 'Mission-critical' data was handled first, with each dataset ranked in order of priority. This initial process took about three months. The project completion date was set for 30 June 2009.

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## Outcomes and impact

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The data itself is now used in the Fire Services Emergency Cover toolkit (FSEC). This is a risk analysis product supplied for fire services by the Communities and Local Government. The data is also integral to CFRS systems for commercial building site assessments and fire safety checks.

This project was highly commended in the 2007 NLPG Exemplar Awards, and a case study relating to this work can be seen on the NLPG website.

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## What could we have done better?

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The actual data matching exercise took longer than anticipated, partly due to the different methods of working between the organisations. With hindsight, the project managers would have allowed longer in the project plan to allow for this part of the project.

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## Next steps

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The NLPG is now used for the following areas of work at CFRS:

- community safety
- home fire safety activity
- commercial building site assessments
- the water team
- fire services emergency cover toolkit.

Matching the address data used by mobile fire crews will now follow. Nicola Smith, Business Information Manager at CFRS says: "We have had a good deal of positive feedback from the districts. They now feel that they have a partner or 'critical friend' out in the community constantly validating the work they do. If there was one single message to send out to other fire services who have not yet engaged with this process it would be that you do have the power to change and update the data. The feedback loop is invaluable and the data can only get better as a result."

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## Further information

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The CFRS Gazetteer Replacement business case study is available on the NLPG website.