

Supported by



Policy Principles

Supporting the effective
use of address data

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The importance of the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) in council systems

Address data and the UPRN are critical for local authorities in creating better outcomes for people and communities. Their use has proven to be fundamental in creating connected, resilient and sustainable places.

The Local Government Association (LGA) further emphasises the role of the UPRN by stating, *"The Unique Property Reference Number - the unique identifier for every addressable location - is key to almost everything that's delivered or achieved by councils."*

Use of the UPRN has the ability to generate insightful household intelligence, enabling local authorities to become more aware, evidence driven, targeted and proactive in their approach to delivering services to residents.

If address data and the UPRN are used, authorities have the potential to make significant cost savings (up to 6:1 Return on Investment) through increased efficiency, enhanced communication, digital transformation and joined up service delivery.

6:1 Return on Investment



The purpose of this guidance

This document introduces a set of policy principles aimed at ensuring local authority software systems are correctly utilising address data and the UPRN.

The guidance outlines how you can tailor these principles and insert them into an existing, relevant policy in order to uphold them on a council-wide basis.

This approach represents a simple mechanism for local authorities to support the adoption and correct handling of address data and the UPRN.

These principles can be adapted or used in part as necessary for your authority. In addition, the wording used in this document should be considered as a suggestion only.

Key principles and data themes

A primary high-level principle is defined in the template:

All council systems referencing property information must use the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN).

This is underpinned by 5 sub-principles which drill down on the key themes of address data usage:



The principles have been identified as common barriers to effective data usage, highlighted through engagement between GeoPlace and local authorities.

The principles aim to prevent these barriers by outlining key actions at an operational level, promoting better, more effective use of address data and the UPRN. In turn, this leads to better outcomes for the department using the data, the authority as whole and more importantly residents through enhanced service delivery.

Format of the principles

We have followed The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) format to provide further detail for each principle. This framework is commonly adopted by I.T. departments (used in enterprise architecture) and follows a clear, yet simple structure of outlining purpose and value.

For example we list the below for each:

→ **The principle name**

The name of the principle to refer to it

→ **The principle statement**

The behaviour / requirement being asked

→ **Rationale**

Why it is important for the local authority to implement

→ **Implications**

What needs to happen in order to achieve the principle

Your authority may or may not utilise this format (there is no implication that you should), however if you do not, then please feel free to adapt the structure and content however you see fit in order to align with your local conventions.

Identifying an existing policy

We recommend the principles are added to an existing, ratified council policy such as those below or similar. You may decide to choose one or multiple policies to target for inclusion based on their purpose.

Policy type	High level purpose	Benefit if principles are included
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement 	Evaluates software / services against a defined criteria, ensuring it meets requirements.	Ensures new software / services are able to utilise address data and the UPRN in the required way at point of purchase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data management • Data standards • Information architecture • Enterprise architecture (data domain) 	Defines how council data should be created, stored, used, shared and disposed.	Provides an ongoing requirement for council departments and teams to use the UPRN wherever property information is referenced.

These policies typically already exist and are an established means to which the adoption, handling and integration of the UPRN can be formally represented and evaluated at critical decision points.

Engagement and collaboration with the relevant policy owner(s) is required to achieve their inclusion into existing policies. In some cases this will require an element of outreach and education about the wider benefits of address data and the UPRN. Supporting material to help explain this can be found below.

Depending on how the existing policy is structured and the level of detail it contains, you may only be permitted to include a single principle. If this is the case, the high-level principle should be selected with the 5 sub-principles and their explanations being referenced in the appendices or similar.

Tailoring to your needs

Should you wish to adopt these principles (in part or in their entirety), we strongly advise tailoring the language and structure accordingly to achieve the impact and uptake you are seeking.

Verb definitions

The policy principles use verbs to imply a level of adherence to the rule each is setting. The choice of verb used requires careful thought and we encourage you adapt the statements to achieve maximum uptake and impact within your authority.

Verb selection	Implication
Must	An absolute requirement
Should	A recommendation
May	Permission
Can	Possibility or capability

Defining a source of address data

There are multiple address data products freely available under the Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSGA). Each of these may vary based on;

- Update cycles / currency
- File formats / mechanism of delivery e.g. API
- Classification types
- Lifecycle information (Approved, Provisional, Alternative, Historical)
- Links to Royal Mail PAF / VOA data
- Geographic coverage

As a result, a “one-size-fits-all” approach should not be adopted where the same address dataset is recommended for all situations. Instead, the source of address data should be defined on a case-by case-basis to ensure all requirements of the intended user(s) are met.

Therefore, the first sub-principle requires a team or individual to be signposted who is able to advise on selecting the most appropriate data product. Further guidance on the various address data sources available and how to determine the most appropriate can be found in the [GeoPlace Integration Knowledge Base](#).

Principles template

The following sections are text you can use to communicate the importance of address data and the UPRN to your selected policy owner, helping to build the case for adopting the principles listed below.

[1. Consuming](#)[2. Updating](#)[3. Interpreting](#)[4. Displaying](#)[5. Sharing](#)

Policy principles supporting the effective use of address data

Introduction

[Insert local authority name] is the creator of definitive, legally known addresses for land and property within the authority boundary. This includes the assignment of Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs), a unique identifier which has been mandated by central government since 1st July 2020 as the standard means of referencing and sharing property information.

In order to realise the benefits of effectively integrated data, official addresses and their UPRNs must be used in council systems which reference property information. The following set of policy principles set out how this can be achieved. It is the intention that these are incorporated into the authority's existing **[insert identified policy name]** policy as this provides a strategic mechanism to promote the better use of address data.

[1. Consuming](#)[2. Updating](#)[3. Interpreting](#)[4. Displaying](#)[5. Sharing](#)

Primary high-level principle

All council systems referencing property information **MUST** use the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN).

This is achieved through the following 5 sub-principles:



Principle statements

● Consuming

Software which references, stores or shares property information **must** use the UPRN and “official addresses” from a data product defined by **[insert name of team / individual able to advise on the various address data products]**.

● Updating

Address data **must** be updated on a regular schedule appropriate to the consuming department / services’ need, with errors communicated to the Authority Address Custodian.

● Interpreting

Software **must** be able to handle the one-to-many multiplicity within the defined source of address data and correctly construct an address from its various fields.

● Displaying

The Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) **must** be visible and searchable for users of the system.

● Sharing

Where software provides exports or reports of departmental information referencing properties, it **must** do so with the UPRN.

1. Consuming

2. Updating

3. Interpreting

4. Displaying

5. Sharing



Principle name: Consuming address data and the UPRN

Principle statement:

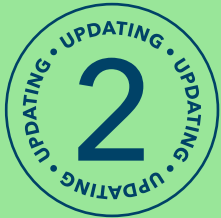
Software which references, stores or shares property information **MUST** use the UPRN and “official addresses” from a data product defined by [insert name of team / individual able to advise on the various address data products].

Rationale (why is it important?):

- If not drawn from a definitive source, an address can be represented in multiple incorrect forms which has the potential to create confusion, communication issues and significant delays to service delivery. Using the legal, official address avoids this.
- UPRNs provide a rapid, unambiguous means of reference as well as a unique key for household based data-linking.

Implications: (what needs to happen):

- If property information is referenced, the UPRN **must** accompany each property.
- If property information is stored, the UPRN **must** be held against each property in the underlying database.
- If property information is shared, the UPRN **must** be supplied with each property.
- Where addresses are used, these **must** be sourced directly from the defined data product.
- If addresses are manually entered, its UPRN **must** be obtained and also inserted.



Principle name: Updating address data

Principle statement:

Address data **MUST** be updated on a regular schedule appropriate to the consuming department / service's need, with errors communicated to the Authority Address Custodian.

Rationale (why is it important?):

- The frequency of update **must** match the requirements of the department, service or team using it. For example, if the department require weekly updates of address data, then a monthly update will mean information is stale and will not contain the required property additions or changes that occur. This can delay service delivery.
- Updating address data is a complex process. Loading issues often occur and are not communicated for resolution. This leads to inaccurate address information being held in the system (missing or incorrect addresses). The aim is to ensure updates are error free and the system contains 100% of the required address information.
- Where possible, automating the update process avoids the requirement for an individual manually having to trigger it and possessing specialist system knowledge. Automation ensures the data update occurs without delay and removes the potential for manual error.

Implications: (what needs to happen):

- The software **must** update its holding of address data in line with required update frequency of the consuming department, service or team.
- The selected address data product will have its own update frequency cycle and this **must** also be suitable.
- Errors during the loading phase which prevent the insertion, update or deletion of addresses **should** be well documented and supplied to the Authority Address Custodian.
- The method used to update address data **should** be automated where possible to avoid human interaction, availability and error. The use of APIs to consume address data such as the OS Places API is preferred.

1. Consuming

2. Updating

3. Interpreting

4. Displaying

5. Sharing



Principle name: **Interpreting address data**

Principle statement:

Software **MUST** be able to handle the one-to-many multiplicity within the defined source of address data and correctly construct an address from its various fields.

Rationale (why is it important?):

- Address data can contain multiple representations of the same property through the use of Land and Property Identifiers (LPIs). A property (UPRN) can have multiple LPIs, creating a one-to-many (UPRN-to-LPI) relationship. For example bi-lingual authorities in Wales where properties have both an English and Welsh address using the same UPRN, or where properties alternative “names”.
- Software commonly assumes there is a single address (LPI) for each property. As a result, the multiple representations (LPIs) are either removed entirely or an incorrect LPI is selected to be displayed when it shouldn't.
- Addresses can exist as multiple fields which conform to BS7666 and may need to be constructed to form a “postal address” or “single line address”. If done incorrectly, an address can appear wrong, causing confusion and a delay to service delivery.

Implications: (what needs to happen):

- If the required address data source contains multiplicity, the software must be able to interpret this correctly as per the requirements of the department, service or team the software belongs to.
- The department, service or team must define exactly which representations (LPIs) they would like to be included (“Approved”, “Alternative”, “Provisional”, “Historical”, English, Welsh or Gaelic).
- If only a single LPI is required, the lowest “LOGICAL_STATUS” number **should** be selected.
- Where an address needs to be reconstituted to form a “postal address” or “single line address”, the guidance in the [GeoPlace Data Entry Conventions \(DEC\) and Best Practice Document for Addresses V3.4 Section 13. “Generating Postal Addresses”](#) **should** be followed.

1. Consuming

2. Updating

3. Interpreting

4. Displaying

5. Sharing



Principle name: **Displaying the UPRN**

Principle statement:

The Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) **MUST** be visible and searchable for users of the system.

Rationale (why is it important?):

- UPRNs provide a rapid means of searching and referring to a property. In order to do this, users of a system must have the UPRN visible in the user interface for them to see, copy and onwardly communicate.
- Enabling users to conduct an address search using the UPRN instead of an address string provides an absolute reference to an address. This avoids the risk of selecting the incorrect address or not finding it.
- Not allowing users to view and search for a UPRN removes their ability to rapidly communicate and locate property information.

Implications: (what needs to happen):

- Software utilising property information **must** display its corresponding UPRN to users.
- Where a property search is provided, software **should** allow users to search using the UPRN to locate a property.

[1. Consuming](#)[2. Updating](#)[3. Interpreting](#)[4. Displaying](#)[5. Sharing](#)



Principle name: **Sharing the UPRN**

Principle statement:

Where software provides exports or reports of departmental information referencing properties, it **must** do so with the UPRN.

Rationale (why is it important?):

- When exported with departmental information, the UPRN provides a rapid means of data-linking, allowing household information to be centralised from across the authority and providing key service delivery insights.
- The absence of the UPRN makes any exported data extremely difficult to link and involves a time consuming, costly process to match and cleanse which is subject to error.

Implications: (what needs to happen):

- Software exports or reports referencing property information **must** include its corresponding UPRN as standard functionality.

1. Consuming

2. Updating

3. Interpreting

4. Displaying

5. Sharing

Contacts and Further Information

For more information on this document
and to discuss your integration contact
communications@geoplace.co.uk

For technical guidance contact
support@geoplace.co.uk

For detailed information and resources
on integrating departmental systems, visit
the GeoPlace Integration Knowledge Base
<https://integration.geoplace.co.uk/>



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