



# Sefton Council uses the Local Land and Property Gazetteer to integrate key council services

At the heart of any publicly provided services, location data – information about streets and properties – are in a host of different datasets. Clearly, optimum integration means lower costs and better results; enabling teams to work in harmony, improving services to end customers. As the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) holds the definitive list of properties within an area, it is the obvious cornerstone for integration in any local authority.

## The challenge

Sefton Council fully understands the value of its LLPG. Like any local gazetteer, its LLPG needs ongoing data management to include new properties. This is in line with current standards to ensure it remains a robust, trusted contributor to the National Address Gazetteer; the teams at Sefton know this and they work hard to stay on top of their LLPG's currency and accuracy.

However, for a while, several other address datasets were being maintained at the same time. This was a duplication of effort, it created opportunities for identical entries, errors, marginally different datasets and data problems all round. For some departments, the 'we'll maintain that extra dataset' approach was useful, to a point, but the ambiguity it created meant there wasn't a single point of truth in use, which inevitably increased costs and expose the council to higher levels of risk than necessary.

The challenge then was to engage widely and fully exploit the benefits of the LLPG as the single definitive source of address data – effectively, efficiently and securely managing all addressing held within Sefton Council.

## The solution

The first step involved spreading the word about the principles behind best use of the LLPG, to everyone who might be involved, in Sefton and beyond. The document was referred to as Address Management Policy – and it revealed many of the often-unspoken benefits. Things like

- Saving lives – ensuring emergency services can find locations faster
- Increasing efficiency – joining-up services throughout the local authority
- Reducing costs – improving the quality of information going out to suppliers
- Improving customer satisfaction – making it easier to access Sefton Council's services

Address management isn't limited to address data, so the policy applied to all stakeholders involved in using location information; the business processes they follow; and the systems they had been using to create, access and publish address data.

Importantly, the policy doesn't prevent a department from working towards their business objectives. But if there's a need for non-LLPG address data, then it's a defined need that's delivered as a short-term exception under agreed circumstances.

The policy also introduces the idea of LLPG contact officers who are responsible for LLPG integration within their area of work.

The LLPG custodian holds forums, in which all the designated contact officers are expected to take an active role. This helps to acquire feedback and discuss how or where services might be improved. The LLPG custodian consults with end users too, to ensure functionality meets their needs. An internal and external web form was also created to allow for any LLPG users to raise queries quickly, and feedback is always taken onboard, which boosts confidence all round.

The policy also covers system procurement in depth. For the long term, this is the ideal way to ensure inefficiency isn't being built in to the Council's business model by mistake. Every new system (if at all possible), needs to work with the LLPG. To aid with this, a standard form of wording is provided in the policy, which departments can send out to potential suppliers.

One of the most important steps in creating the Address Management Policy, was to review the tools within Sefton Council's gazetteer management system. Detailed specifications were written as standalone guides by the Address Custodian, and existing software was evaluated against those requirements. Where necessary, software that didn't meet the grade was then replaced with more a capable option - new Gazetteer Management System (GMS) - and this included an automated service to provide multiple format and scheduled updates to anyone requesting LLPG data. This allows bulk updates to multiple objects, which can be controlled through a visual front end (a map, in short). It's a very user-friendly way of address-matching external address datasets against the LLPG - saving time in the process - and further improving the level of integration, right across the council's systems.

## The results

As a result of creating, sharing and acting on its own Address Management Policy, Sefton Council's improved Gazetteer Management System (GMS) is improving the accuracy, currency, completeness, availability, and overall quality of the council's address data, and it's doing this faster, which also delivers cost efficiencies.

Being able to automatically push out more frequent updates to multiple recipients means that Sefton can place the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) at the heart of its service delivery - meeting the directives of the Government Digital Service who have mandated that central government bodies should use UPRN and the USRN standards to identify geographic locations.

With LLPG data now being current across multiple systems, it's also been possible to develop custom functionality that allows front office systems to automatically raise jobs with back office systems. This means that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) teams can pass their service requests from customers far more efficiently, through the CRM, using background procedures that use the UPRN as a check between disparate systems. The same functionality lets customer self-serve too, with the UPRN carrying out the digital joining up between a web-based dashboard and the Council's many different service areas.

Over time, as more systems have taken on the LLPG, administrative overheads have been further reduced. Much of this cost reduction has been through removing the duplication of effort that went into maintaining different datasets, which meant the officers in those departments had more time to focus on their own core activities.

It is much less expensive to put a robust Address Management Policy in place and maintain shareable LLPG address data in a single application, than it is to maintain duplicate data in multiple applications.

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