

Dartford Borough Council receive prestigious National Award



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Press release

Dartford Borough Council has received a prestigious national award in recognition of the creative use it has made of its property data to help in the delivery of its 'Sustainable Homes Energy Strategy'. The 2008 Exemplar Award for the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) 'Most Creative Use', acknowledges the innovative way in which the Council used its property database to collect data from multiple sources to target residential properties in need of improvement. The annual Exemplar Awards for Local Government are presented by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and Intelligent Addressing.

To combat the increasing dangers of global warming and climate change, the Government introduced a bill to tackle rising carbon dioxide emissions. The Climate Change bill commits the UK to cutting emissions by 60% by 2050 and at least 26% by 2020. Local Authorities have an important role in the achieving these targets by promoting energy efficiency. Dartford Borough Council in partnership with Creative Environmental Networks (CEN), British Gas, Powergen and National Energy Action has adopted a 'Sustainable Homes Energy Strategy' that aims to conserve energy and reduce emissions by improving current housing stock, promoting energy efficiency and targeting grants to disadvantaged groups.

As part of its strategy it was necessary to collate information from various departments and external groups. Using its property database (NLPG) as the spine Dartford Borough Council was able to create a rich picture of home energy use for each residential property. Information was combined from Building Control, Development Control, Estates, Housing, British Gas, Council Tax and survey work from local residents to estimate a SAP energy rating for each property within Dartford. This information is then used to target improvements to properties with the help of external organisations, assists with mail shots and provides evidence to policy makers. This has resulted in lower energy bills and real improvements in citizens' quality of life.

John Hayes, Director at the Improvement and Development Agency, said as he presented the award "Dartford Borough Council have leveraged the power of their property data to great effect, using it to provide the backbone for what is a highly complex data collection exercise. The results have been impressive with real improvements in the quality of life of residents and reduced energy bills. This ability to present maps and other forms of data to property level has helped promote climate change and energy efficiency measures to a much wider audience."

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Notes to Editors:

The NLPG was initiated in 1999 to become the master address dataset for England and Wales and the central hub for the 376 address creating Local Authorities and their Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPGs). Based on unique property reference numbers (UPRNs) the underlying principle of these gazetteers is to provide a single definitive address database for all departments and systems across a local authority in order to cut costs, improve efficiency and service delivery.

The dataset enables various local authority departments – from revenue collection and environmental health, to social security, the electoral roll and education – to now offer true 'joined up' government. The benefits also go beyond service delivery. Fraud prevention, tax collection and disaster planning all benefit from the fact that each property is given a 'Unique Property Reference Number' which transcends (property) numbers, names, descriptions (such as 'The Nursing Home') and postcodes. UPRNs are assigned for the full life of the plot and/or building.

The project was given a significant boost in 2005 with the introduction of the Mapping Services Agreement, which committed all Local Authorities to bringing their gazetteers up to standard and to start submitting regular updates to the NLPG hub for use by national and regional organisations. Collaboration with DNA-S (Definitive National Addressing for Scotland) who use the same BS7666 processes and database schemas means that the a British addressing infrastructure is now a reality.

The **Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)** The IDeA works in partnership with all councils, to enhance the performance of the best, accelerate the speed of improvement of the rest, and develop the sector as a whole. IDeA has brokered the Mapping Services Agreement (MSA) with Intelligent Addressing to develop the NLPG and NSG, through the Local Government Information House (LGIH), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Agency.

Working in partnership with the local government community developing national infrastruc-

ture projects that enable councils to deliver local services more effectively, LGIH acts as an intermediary between the public and the private sector enabling it to negotiate with private companies on behalf of local authorities in order to provide key parts of a technical infrastructure for improved service delivery.

The NLPG is a joint venture between the Information House and Intelligent Addressing Limited.

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Intelligent Addressing is a specialist private sector consultancy employing recognised experts in addressing. It was originally set up to help develop the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) on behalf of local government and now manages the NLPG and NSG central data hubs under the terms of the Mapping Services Agreement (MSA) with local government.

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