Geospatial information offer

How the Improvement Service can help you to transform the use of your Geospatial Information to support service delivery and provide vital insight

is.

improvement **service**

Utilising the power of data

The Spatial Information Service was established by the Improvement Service (IS) with the objective of unlocking local government data, thereby increasing the return on the investment in resourcing and technology for local authorities.

The IS has delivered this in tandem with the priority to improve the quality and consistency of the information shared, to enable the use of the data to positively influence outcomes.

Over the past ten years, the Spatial Information Service has gone from strength to strength, delivering key national digital services, including the One Scotland Gazetteer, the Spatial Hub, tellmescotland and the provision of Digital Planning support and expertise.

The **One Scotland Gazetteer** underpins address and street data within almost every public sector organisation in Scotland. This includes vital use cases such as within emergency service command and control operations, underpinning the Census, and enabling the conveyancing of properties through use by Registers of Scotland and the Energy Savings Trust.

The **Spatial Hub** is an extensive data repository that hosts in excess of 70 national datasets combining key policy information from each of Scotland's local authorities. The platform holds data across a range of critical themes, including education, health, political, societal, energy, transport, and is widely recognised as the planning and environment evidence base for Scotland.
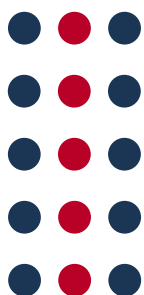
Geospatial Information as the enabler

Geospatial information is data that contains information about the location of people, transactions, services or events. It plays a unique and fundamental role in our understanding of place and how citizens and visitors interact with an area.

When effectively implemented, geospatial data can underpin almost all council service areas - enabling seamless analysis to aid our understanding of our urban and rural spaces and in the evaluation of policy to directly support decision-making.

Underpinning council systems with common identifiers, such as the UPRN (the unique property reference number) facilitates the linking of disparate systems and information sources, saving considerable resource in data management. Users also benefit from access to the official address, as held with the One Scotland Gazetteer, delivering efficiencies through adopting the authoritative source and preventing duplication of effort.

However, geospatial information can be challenging to manage and interact with. This is why the IS is offering expert services to simplify, host and publish data in easily consumable and user-friendly services. These outputs can be used by staff across an organisation – with the aim of informing, influencing and aiding analysis.

How the IS can help

The IS has assembled an experienced and skilled Spatial Information Service, with extensive knowledge of geospatial data management within the Scottish public sector.

Over a period of ten years, the Service has engaged with key data personnel across all of Scotland's local authorities, along with the wider public sector. A vast network has been established and relationships built. IS colleagues understand the working environment, along with the software systems used to manage, analyse and publish information, and are therefore ideally placed to support your organisation to deliver the key outcomes required.

Support Services Available

The following list of support services is not exhaustive, and combinations of support areas can be tailored to suit each use case:

Data Hosting and Publication

- The Spatial Hub offers the facility to host and publish your data to meet the needs of citizens and businesses.

- Data can be published under open licence terms, allowing your organisation to deliver on its open data obligations and aspirations.

Data Management Service

- IS offers a service to manage local authority Corporate Address and Street Gazetteer functions. Data is maintained to national conventions and is inherently linked to local authority back-office operations via webservices.

- The Spatial Hub offers the ability to manage a variety of your geospatial datasets to agreed specification and standards.

Webmapping Service

- We can provide easy to interact with webmaps that can be added to your organisation's internal and external webpages, vastly increasing access to the data.

Data Licensing Support and Guidance

- Your organisation is able to draw on support relating to intellectual property and ownership of data.

Back-office Integration Review and System Efficiency Recommendations

- We offer a systemic review of the application of geospatial data within your organisation, including integration scoring and analysis, to highlight further benefits and economies of scale that can be achieved.

Analytics and Insight

- Geospatial information provides unrivalled insight into complex issues and scenarios. We can help to display outputs in a variety of visual ways to aid user requirements and understanding.

Dataset Cleansing and Geocoding

- We offer a review and repair service for any data with variable quality. This includes linking information to key universal identifiers, such as the UPRN. geocoding data to the accurate location, and benchmarking the quality, completion and currency of the information.

Statutory Reporting

- With expertise in Digital Planning, Building Standards and Information Management, the Spatial Information Service is able to assist with producing statutory and analytical reports, for example Housing or Employment Land Audits.

Geographic Information User Training

- We can provide training specific to the roles and responsibilities of individuals in your organisation, with a focus on service delivery and clear outcomes.

Notification Service: **tellmescotland**

- Use of Scotland's citizen notification service can be used to inform citizens and businesses of public information, including advising of licensing, planning, and traffic notices.

Implementation of Data Maturity Framework

- Supporting your organisation to drive improvement and efficiencies through putting into practice data governance processes and principles that underpin service delivery.

The IS is able to provide some of the above geospatial services free of charge, whilst others will incur a cost.

Case study

During 2024, the Improvement Service provided dedicated digital mapping and IT support to Clackmannanshire Council to help implement a replacement corporate geographic information service.

As part of this, the Spatial Information Service provided guidance on digital data governance, technical support for service areas using specialist software, and acted as a single point of contact for all issues relating to geographic information.

Outputs included a data audit, the implementation of an online mapping capability for citizens, and the development and rollout of an internal geographic information system to staff within the organisation.

By providing the service, the IS was able to help Clackmannanshire Council avoid costly consultancy fees and make significant savings during a period when a full-time post dedicated to digital mapping and GIS services was vacant and the Council had been looking at other ways to provide these services.

"Being able to draw on the experience and knowledge of the Improvement Service has been invaluable to Clackmannanshire Council. The wealth of expertise and skilled resources that we have utilised has provided much needed continuity and the flexible nature of the arrangement has alleviated risk and allowed us to achieve our goals far quicker than would have otherwise been possible."

Grant Baxter, Planning & Building Standards Team Leader, Clackmannanshire Council

Delivery Relationship

We can work with you to agree geospatial support services in a way that best meets your needs and priorities.

We are able to deliver some of the geospatial support services free of charge, whilst others will incur a cost. Our service can be provided via a demand-led model for a flexible number of days to address specific projects or programmes, or as packages of days available at a reduced rate.

We are also able to draw on other expert IS resources, including researchers, analysts and evaluation specialists.

Get in touch

For more information and to discuss how we can support you, please contact us on
spatialhub@improvementservice.org.uk