
Unlocking location through UPRN & USRN

Intro

For almost two decades local authorities have been creating & maintaining Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRN) & Unique Street Reference Numbers (USRN) which detail every property & road in the UK. Use of the UPRN & USRN has led to recognised financial savings & efficiency gains and have become essential to many parts of the public & commercial sector including the Scottish Emergency Services and National Registers of Scotland. This has been achieved by using the UPRN & USRN as a key identifier allowing users of this data to link information across multiple datasets acting as a “golden thread” and thereby reducing errors when sharing data across systems and depts. To help ensure that these benefits can be enshrined across the public sector use of the UPRN & USRN has been mandated by Digital Scotland via the [Open Standards for Government](#)

A quick summary of what this means for organisations:

ICT – Many UK local authorities have already have made the use of the UPRN & USRN mandatory for all new systems by writing this requirement into existing policy documents and agreeing that all new systems should accommodate the UPRN and/or USRN. Public Sector IT strategies should work in tandem with any ongoing corporate Data strategies to help realise any proposed benefits by ensuring all systems & data standards adopt use of the UPRN & USRN where applicable.

Procurement – the public sector should endeavour to ensure that any proposed systems that support front line services can hold the UPRN/USRN. Most IT suppliers/software vendors to the public sector already cater for this requirement by adhering to the BS7666 data standard that was introduced in 2006. Procurement of systems that do not cater for UPRNs & USRN and don't use technology that is widely acknowledged as industry standard (ie data APIs & Web services) will only continue to hamper modernisation efforts and prolong wasteful expenditure.

Corporate Data Strategies – as the public sector work towards fully realised data standards, the public sector needs to ensure that the UPRN & USRN are enshrined as the key to making data interoperable and maximising the use of the data being captured and should be one of the cornerstones of any local authorities corporate data strategies. Data needs to be seen as an asset and this should be reflected by recognising and using agreed data standards.

Resources for the public sector

[Open standards](#) that are compulsory for use in government (not all are data related). This includes things like property and street identifiers (UPRN/USRN), consistent country codes, language codes and persistent identifiers. Such identifiers play a crucial role in enabling the linking of data, as well as negating inefficiencies in the reconciliation of different data sources. · [recommended open standards](#) that meet your requirements. Further information can be found via the [Data Standards team](#) or contact avais.ijaz@improvementservice.org.uk