

Planning and Housing location data independent review published

Whether you are an individual searching for your new home, a developer preparing a planning application or a government official updating a local plan, planning and housing location data plays a critical role in addressing the national challenge of providing housing that meets different needs. We know that location data alone cannot tackle this, but data innovation across housing and planning could have the potential to help build more houses where people want them.

To help this the Geospatial Commission has today published an [independent Planning and Housing Review](#) to take stock of how relevant housing data is currently being accessed and used, and whether more can be done to unlock greater insights and economic value for the UK.

The report identifies where the challenges and opportunities are for better leveraging geospatial data and also outlines what current and forthcoming geospatial initiatives participants of the review were aware of. The cross sector (government, private and third sector) challenges highlighted in the review are related to findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability of data and data standards.

The review also highlights the challenges associated with upskilling, recruiting and retaining staff with the necessary Geographic Information Systems (GIS) experience, as well as programming and data science skills, especially among local authorities. Whilst it is acknowledged that these challenges vary across sectors due to different organisations' size, budget and the significance of geospatial data to the organisational objectives, the lack of geospatial skills and resources has a significant impact on the quality and accessibility of planning and housing data.

Overcoming the data issues evidenced in the review will require action by a wide range of organisations. No one organisation will solve these challenges working alone. However, by setting out the current landscape, we are now better able to identify key opportunity areas, and how we can collaborate across government and sectors to address them.

Thalia Baldwin, Geospatial Commission Director, said:

Location data is critically important to those operating within the planning and housing sectors. We have published this review of the housing location data landscape to help make it easier to understand what is happening in this complex area. The Geospatial Commission will be working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Homes England, HM Land Registry and across the housing and planning sector to consider our collective priorities for location data improvement.

Andrew Trigg, Director of Digital, Data and Technology at HM Land Registry added:

Maintaining and releasing land and property data is an important part of HM Land Registry's work, and we see first-hand the role this data plays in every aspect of our work, from supporting conveyancing to enabling new and emerging applications. This report recognises the value and potential of making data more easily available at both the local and national level, and HMLR supports efforts to make data more findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. We're excited to continue our work to grow and enhance freely available data to further strengthen its impact on the wider economy.

Housing and local planning is an opportunity area identified in the [UK Geospatial Strategy](#) which was launched last year and this review builds on last year's release of [Unique Property and Street Reference Numbers](#) under the Open Government Licence to standardise referencing and sharing of address information about properties and streets across the public sector.

The Geospatial Commission has also brought together [housing, land and planning geospatial datasets](#) to signpost to more than 60 relevant open data sets and a list of over 300 planning and housing datasets.

You can read more about the review and the Commission's work on housing and planning on our [blog page](#).