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Adur and Worthing Councils Accurate property classification with Idox's Aligned Assets LLPG

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Una Herring-Green
LLPG Custodian
Adur & Worthing Councils

Overview:

Need for local authorities to keep up to date with changes in property use

To maximise residents’ safety and safeguard the provision of services, it’s vital that local authorities keep up to date with changes in property use. Using Idox’s Aligned Assets gazetteer has enabled Adur and Worthing Councils to fully automate their classification process.

Challenge:

Manual cross referencing between various systems leading to data inaccuracy

With a direct impact on the bottom line, councils must be able to identify and cross- reference changes-of-use to all their systems, e.g. a premises change from a residential property paying domestic Council Tax to a holiday let that should be paying Non-Domestic Rates. If undetected, a council stands to lose the revenue it should be generating, but it could also mean necessary health and safety inspections aren’t carried out, potentially putting holiday renters at risk.

Changes to property use should also be shared with the Electoral Registration Department; if it receives a request to register to vote from a resident but the premises is classified as commercial, the registration can’t be activated. Likewise, if the premises is a warehouse, the Fire Officer, Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement Teams should all be alerted for safety reasons.

Adur and Worthing Councils had been manually inserting cross-references between their various systems. While some of these, namely the LLPG gazetteer, had a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) for the property, others didn’t, so accuracy of cross-referencing to the correct address could be unpredictable. Manually cross-referencing also meant an inability to detect any changes in other departments’ systems. For example, it might not appear on the Business Rates system that a residential property had changed to a holiday let, or a retail space converted to residential accommodation. Together, these factors were significantly impacting council efficiency.



Solution:

Streamlining address management with Idox's Aligned Assets LLPG gazetteer

A number of strategic links were created from Adur and Worthing Councils' internal systems to Idox's Aligned Assets LLPG gazetteer to streamline the work. By linking location information via the UPRNs, the council has been able to take a more detailed view of every address. Work was also initiated to develop automated cross-references from specific council departments to ensure changes of use were always captured.

Outcome:

Correct classification of properties to ensure accurate billing

The Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates billing references are now automatically loaded into the LLPG, along with Electoral Registration and Environmental Health references.

"Now this process is fully automated, it only takes about one hour a week, saving me around six to eight hours a week. That's almost a full working day I can spend focusing on other areas of my work," commented Una Herring-Green, LLPG Custodian at Adur and Worthing Councils. "We're now confident we're classifying properties correctly, ensuring the right billing and therefore revenue for the use of the property. And the same goes for ensuring any relevant inspections and licences are being requested."

Using the new streamlined and accurate data, Adur and Worthing Councils' LLPG Custodian can work closely with the Councils' Fire Officer to ensure the right information is shared to better safeguard their residents.

The Council Tax, Business Rates, Electoral Registration and Environmental Health systems all search for the UPRN on their internal GIS system, which is updated daily. However, there will always be anomalies. To illustrate how cross-referencing can simplify a complex procedure, let's take the example of when a property owner converts a house into flats. Firstly, the Council Tax team should be contacted to

ensure the correct banding. As that property will only have one UPRN showing the premises as one addressable object, a request can be sent via Idox's Aligned Assets address search solution, requesting separate addresses. The LLPG Custodian can then create the addresses, with their own UPRNs, which can be shared with Council Tax. If no planning applications were received or granted for the conversion, the data is also shared with Planning Enforcement, Environmental Health and the Building Control Departments. In the same way, the Business Rates Department also uses address search data to locate the UPRN. Once the UPRN is located, the correct Billing Reference is applied and shared with the Valuation Office.

As a result of these tailored links, most internal systems receive the Change Only Update (COU) files daily into their systems, ensuring the information across departments and systems is accurate and consistent, saving time and eliminating confusion.

"This is a great example of how we like to work with our customers to deliver precisely the solution they need to increase their efficiency and accuracy," says Dinesh Thanigasalam, Head of Sales for Address Data Solutions, Idox.

Idox acquired Aligned Assets in 2021, bringing together the pioneering Aligned Assets solution with its own built environment software to offer the most accurate and comprehensive address data solutions on the market.

Call us now on 0333 011 1200 or email marketing@idoxgroup.com to find out more about our Address Data Solutions.

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