

PLYMOUTH'S £10 MILLION GIS REWARD

Providing better value to citizens through GIS

Plymouth has long been a pioneer in the use of GIS and was one of the first councils to build a truly corporate geo-referenced property database. Faced with an array of departmental databases the council set about consolidating 50 datasets; 40 of which were maps with associated data and 10 address datasets.

It took 2 staff 3 years to complete, with staff costs of around £100,000, but today the council is reaping the rewards. In fact Plymouth estimate that they have saved £7.5 million over the last 10 years by eliminating the duplication of effort needed to maintain the datasets, and that is just one area of saving.

Plymouth's success has been underpinned with a suite of corporate solutions from GGP Systems including the GGP GIS and LLPG management software (NGz).

Much of the council's information is now immediately available council wide and to Plymouth's citizens. This has led to real efficiencies since officers and staff do not need to spend time digging out records. With websites and call centres handling day to day enquiries for different departments, additional efficiencies are being achieved.

"If we didn't have call centres or equivalent, such as forms on the web, then to deal with the enquiries a department has to deal with would probably require employing 1 or 2 more experienced staff per department with all the ongoing costs and space requirements that entails" says Barry Foster, Plymouth's Property Records Controller.

Plymouth has also saved at least £100,000 on map storage costs thanks to GIS and probably saved ten times that amount by eliminating the manual updating of maps. GIS has also been an important tool in determining how to optimise resources, with potentially millions of pounds saved re-structuring services.

"However I think the major benefit of GIS is the ability to share information. That for me is more significant - the fact that combining accessibility of map based information with accurate address information from the LLPG means that departments have much greater productivity per staff member than we used to have," explains Barry Foster.



"GGP Systems provides real value and provides solutions that minimise implementation and running costs. The investment and licensing costs have been competitive, support has been good and product development has been in line with our needs. This has allowed Plymouth to maximise our return on investment. It would not surprise me if the savings from GIS and the LLPG have exceeded £10 million; money that has been re-invested in delivering better services to the citizens of Plymouth"

Barry Foster, Property Records Controller, Plymouth City Council