

Government Investment Opens up UPRNs and USRN for Great Britain



GeoPlace has worked closely with Ordnance Survey, the Local Government Association, and the Geospatial Commission to reach agreement on the opening up of the UPRN and USRN as part of the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA), which was announced [recently](#). With the [release of the UPRN and USRN under an Open Government Licence](#), the Government Digital Service has now [mandated](#) that Unique Property Reference Numbers and Unique Street Reference Numbers are to be the public sector standard for referencing and sharing property and street information.

As we instinctively use addresses to communicate information about ourselves and the world around us, the UPRN and USRN perform the same role in digital data sharing. The UPRN, the unique identifier for each address in the AddressBase range of products from

Ordnance Survey, can help link internal datasets together and share information with other organisations who use the UPRN.

Similarly, the USRN is the unique identifier for every street in the UK. The USRN exists within the OS MasterMap Highways Network products and the NSG (National Street Gazetteer) which is the definitive source of street information used in the notification of street and road works by utilities and highways authorities needing to carry out work on or around streets in England and Wales.

Maximising the value of geospatial data

Minister for Housing Rt Hon Christopher Pincher said: “I am delighted by today’s announcement and encouraged by the new opportunities this presents to digitally transform public services and boost our economy. This is the most powerful boost for the UK PropTech sector in a generation, unlocking new levels of digital innovation on a national scale. Open identifiers are crucial for tech entrepreneurs and wider industry – they will enable housing developers to find sites that have the most potential, helping deliver much-needed new homes across the country. This is an important milestone in the Government’s commitment to maximising the value of geospatial data.”

Nick Chapallaz, managing director of GeoPlace said: “GeoPlace welcomes the new ten-year Public Sector Geospatial Agreement and announcement of the wide availability of UPRNs and USRNs. UPRNs and USRNs are the unique identifiers for every spatial address in Great Britain, stable over time and easy to share between systems. They are an incredibly simple but powerful way of linking address and street data across many services.”

Chapallaz continued: “We welcome the government’s commitment to supporting the wider public use of definitive address and street information. With this new government mandate, we can transform the way services are provided, resulting in better outcomes thanks to greater accuracy and immediate data sharing and matching.”

Increasing use of geodata in the private sector

Thalia Baldwin, director of the Geospatial Commission said: “The Geospatial Commission was created in 2018 to make sure the UK maximises the opportunity location data presents for society, the economy and the environment. UPRNs and USRNs are the ‘golden thread’ of our location data. Over the past year we have worked closely with GeoPlace, the Local Government Association, the Improvement Service and Ordnance Survey to see how we can make them widely available, free of charge. I am also pleased that the Open Standards Board has mandated their use across the public sector. Opening up these identifiers will unlock economic value across the economy, including the housing and planning sectors.”

Today’s announcement demonstrates the value that geospatial data is making to the UK economy and is a hugely exciting step for the PropTech sector. Already widely used across the public sector, UPRNs are increasingly being used in the private sector for financial services, delivery and logistics, customer billing, address verification and other location-based services, linking people to places and services.

For highways authorities and statutory undertakers, the USRN is a way to ensure works on streets and roads can be planned more effectively. For the public, this means less traffic congestion, increased safety and lower levels of disruption to road users.

For more information about today’s announcement from the Geospatial Commission, Ordnance Survey, Government Digital Service and the Improvement Service [see here](#).

