

Pitney Bowes Maps Slough's 'Beds in Sheds'

Pitney Bowes, USA, has announced that Slough Borough Council, situated in the South East England region, UK, is using Pitney Bowes MapInfo Stratus as part of its 'Slough Sheds' project. The aim is to create an accurate map of all outbuildings potentially being used as accommodation without permission in the borough.

Slough Borough Council is responsible for all government services for over 140,000 residents. The Council began to suspect that several landlords had undocumented tenants living in converted garages, sheds and outbuildings. Concerned about residents living in potentially unsafe housing, it implemented the Slough Sheds project to solve the challenge of finding illegally occupied structures.

As a participant in the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) "Rogue Landlords" pilot programme, the project took outbuildings data, thermal imagery and Ordnance Survey base maps and used MapInfo Stratus to create a thermal map of outbuildings and extensions across the borough. To obtain the thermal data, a specially-adapted aircraft with thermal and Lidar sensors was used to uncover all outbuildings and extensions in the borough.

The thermal imaging survey data was analysed using MapInfo Stratus and made available as visual displays to all of Slough Borough Council's departments, accessible via the cloud. With the information to hand, the Council can target site visits by housing officers who can access the data on their mobile tablets.

Web-based

The web-based software makes it very easy for GIS data to be used across the authority, said Richard Rollins, consultant, Slough Borough Council. A user can log in via a web browser, which minimises the skills required of a desktop GIS solution. The Council expects to generate more than GBP1 million in additional Council Tax revenue, plus over GBP5 million in other tax income if just ten percent of illegal housing can be regularised.

Slough's 'beds-in-sheds' map is cited by the DCLG as an example of best practice for other Local Authorities to follow and has been used in a presentation to the Housing and Immigration Ministers at the House of Commons.

Slough Borough Council has used MapInfo Stratus in an innovative way to solve real life community, safety and fiscal issues, said James Brayshaw, Enterprise Data Management, Location and GIS, EMEA for Pitney Bowes. MapInfo Stratus allows Slough to integrate a myriad of GIS data into one central, interactive mapping portal that enables users to see all of the analysed information at a glance. Slough Borough Council is now able to share GIS data not just within the organisation, but also with citizens and other stakeholders to keep them informed, he added.

Further to the "beds in sheds" project, the council's highways department is now using MapInfo Stratus to re-examine flood risk, environmental teams are using the thermal data to drive energy conservation initiatives and the education department is mapping the travel distance to schools.

For more information on Pitney Bowes MapInfo Stratus and how it can help businesses to share information efficiently via interactive maps online see [here](https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/pitney-bowes-maps-slough-s-beds-in-sheds).