

## “What Works”: iStandUK Innovation Award 2016

<b>Title</b>	<b>Surrey Planning Hub</b>
<b>Organisation(s)</b>	<b>Surrey Digital Services</b>
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Service area <sup>1</sup>	1577. Open data publication, 487. Planning applications, 855. Planning consultations
Tags	iStandUK, Data Standards, Data Sharing, Planning, Local Engagement

### Description of project

The Planning Hub was developed by Surrey Digital Services (SDS), a coalition of local authorities with a shared vision of creating platform data and technology services in an open, innovative and pragmatic way. SDS is not about building a specific product, website, app or piece of software, it is about exploring new ways of working, sharing skills, challenging assumptions, innovating and using common data standards to facilitate more joined up [digital] public service provision.

The Planning Hub ([digitalservices.surreyi.gov.uk](http://digitalservices.surreyi.gov.uk)) set out to create a consolidated feed of planning information across Surrey, regardless of originating authority, computer systems or administrative boundaries. Alongside Hampshire County Council, DCLG and iStandUK we collaborated to create the national planning application data standard.

The Hub currently harvests data from 11 providers at presents it in aggregate form for anyone to access via API. This has never before been possible, despite the significant value to business processes and huge public popularity. It helps society to engage with local planning matters and specifically for developers and civic entrepreneurs to consume the data in order to improve public interaction with our planning services.



### What makes this initiative remarkable?

The Planning Hub was designed and implemented quickly, at low cost, using agile principles. It quickly gathered support due to the use of common standards and sensible, shareable methodologies. The latter meant that no additional burden was placed on back-office staff as data is extracted processed and published automatically. Thanks for the ground work of the Surrey GIS Forum, common technology was already in place and hence syntax, semantics, transport and information governance details could be shared in order to expedite open data publication.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the Local Government Service List.

<http://standards.esd.org.uk/?uri=list%2FenglishAndWelshServices&tab=downloads>

The Hub’s embeddable web map can be placed on any website using less than 10 lines of HTML and retrieval of machine-readable data from the API has attracted interest from technology startups such as Land Insight and The Land App (the latter seeking to facilitate the data exchange process between citizen, public and private bodies). A limitation acknowledged at the outset of the project was around publication of Ordnance Survey derived data components. The Hub has helped to bring this topic to the fore among the UK geospatial community and SDS have been responsible for high-level negotiations with OS, BEIS, the Cabinet Office, DCLG, LGA, the ODI and others.

### **What has the project achieved?**

The Planning Hub offers live access to planning information across the whole of the County, whether by our mobile-responsive, embeddable web map or directly via our query-rich API. All individual XML data feeds are produced in accordance with the national schema, including use of Linked Data principles in the cross-referencing to DCLG’s open data communities, the LGA’s ESD service list and local planning information portals. Thanks to the recognition of this planning data schema by the LGA with its Incentive Scheme, there are now some 70 publishing authorities across the country. With compatible standards and a central technology stack in place, these could be included within the Hub.

Many of the current contributors to the Hub also syndicate their data (and standardised metadata) via data.gov.uk. The entire source-code for our central aggregation (and validation) hub is freely available on GitHub for anyone to re-purpose or improve. Likewise, full wiki instructions for use of the Surrey Hub service is available on our website, where examples illustrate just how easy it is to extract formatted geoJSON data using URL calls. Full details of the data standard are published by the LGA.

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Video case study:	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ku9qQk4IGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ku9qQk4IGE</a>
Links:	<a href="http://digitalservices.surreyi.gov.uk/">http://digitalservices.surreyi.gov.uk/</a>
For more information please contact:	<a href="mailto:paul.davidson@sedgemoor.gov.uk">paul.davidson@sedgemoor.gov.uk</a>

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